DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 346 183 UD 028 641

AUTHOR Cruz, Jose E., Ed.
TITLE Puerto Ricans: Breaking Out of the Cycle of Poverty.
INSTITUTION National Puerto Rican Coalition, Washington, DC.
PUB DATE Jun 90
NOTE 109p.; Background papers for presentations at the Annual Meeting of the National Puerto Rican Coalition (9th, Boston, MA, November 2-3, 1989).
PUB TYPE Collected Works - General (020)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Affirmative Action; Census Figures; Civil Rights; Community Programs; Conference Papers; Economically Disadvantaged; Family Structure; Females; *Hispanic Americans; Labor Force; *Poverty; *Puerto Ricans; Racial Discrimination
IDENTIFIERS Language Minorities

ABSTRACT

This report contains three background papers for reports presented at the ninth annual conference of the National Puerto Rican Coalition (NPRC) in 1989 and a discussion concerning Puerto Rican Americans and the cycle of poverty originally presented at a conference. The first paper, "Beyond the Census Data: A Portrait of the Community" (C. E. Rodriguez), analyzes the 1990 Census data including questions concerning the methodological limitations of that data and, therefore, the questions that it cannot answer. The second paper, "The Puerto Rican Family and Poverty: Complex Paths to Poor Outcomes" (D. T. Gurak and L. M. Falcon), uses several sources of data on the migration, family formation, and labor force histories of Puerto Rican women in an effort to better understand the sources of the high incidence of poverty in this population. The third paper, "Developing a Community Based Strategy To Address the Persistence of Poverty in the U.S. Puerto Rican Community," presents a NPRC strategy involving its own network of community organizations. The strategy identifies the following areas for intervention: (1) educational reform; (2) jobs training; (3) application of the 1988 welfare reform; (4) community economic development programs; and (5) civil rights enforcement. The document closes with an essay by L. Bonilla that reflects on the other three papers and the issues they raise. Included are 117 references and 1 table. (JB)

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PUERTO RICANS: BREAKING OUT OF THE CYCLE OF POVERTY

June 1990

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Background papers for presentations at "Puerto Rican Poverty Forum," at the National Puerto Rican Coalition's Ninth Annual Conference, Boston, MA-- November 2-3, 1989.

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THE NATIONAL PUERTO RICAN COALITION, INC.

The National Puerto Rican Coalition, Inc. (NPRC) was founded in 1977 to further the social, economic and political well-being of Puerto Ricans throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. Based in Washington, D.C., NPRC is a nonprofit, tax-exempt association providing a presence and voice at the national level for all Puerto Ricans.

As a membership Association, NPRC has access to grassroots views of Puerto Rican needs, problems and aspirations. NPRC conveys these views to decision makers through its contacts with the media, leading institutions, and individuals in the public and private sectors.

To further its mission NPRC has developed programs in three broad areas. Programs in advocacy, research, and policy analysis are carried out primarily in washington, D.C. Programs to enhance the image of Puerto Ricans in the United States, such as the NPRC Life Achievement Awards, are carried out nationally. Partnership projects in community economic development are carried out locally.

All programs are designed with the goal of affecting national policies as they impact the Puerto Rican community.

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Foreword

While an increasing segment of Puerto Ricans living in the United States have broken through the economic and social barriers and have entered the mainstream, there is still a significant portion of our community that falls below the poverty line. For these Puerto Ricans the situation during the past decade has indeed been grim.

The papers included here remind us of this fact. They also suggest some of the possibilities for future analyses of the condition of Puerto Ricans in the United States.

This publication is part of our efforts to relate current research to NPRC's public policy interests, particularly in regard to the issue of persistent poverty in the Puerto Rican community. For this issue to be addressed effectively we need to bring it to national attention and concern.

But bringing the issue to bear on policymaking agendas is only part of our approach to this issue. We also must develop in our communities both a sense of challenge and an optimism that we can change the situation these papers describe. No group can accomplish dramatic changes by struggling alone. We must all work together to ensure that the coming decade is the time when all Puerto Ricans finally enter the mainstream. The publication of these papers represents another step in NPRC's continuing commitment to this task.

Louis Núñez
President

Acknowledgements

NPRC is grateful to the authors who contributed to this document. It also wishes to express its appreciation to José E. Cruz who edited the document and coordinated its publication.

Executive Summary
Beyond the Census Data: A Portrait of the Community

Clara E. Rodríguez

- This paper examines the perspective through which Puerto Ricans are often viewed: the perspective of the data. Utilizing the best available data, it looks at the Puerto Rican community in terms of the standard indicators used in the literature. The data are first presented, then analyzed and interpreted.

- In 1985 there were 2.562 million Puerto Ricans residing in the United States and another 3.270 million in Puerto Rico. Together, the two groups constituted 28.86% of all the Latinos within U.S. borders

- Overall, in the NYC Puerto Rican population, there are about 54 women for every 46 men. But after controlling for age, we find that the numbers of males and females born are roughly the same. By the time Puerto Ricans reach the age of 30, for every five Puerto Rican women there are four Puerto Rican men.

- Puerto Ricans are quite young, on the whole. Their median age of 23.7 is considerably less than the median ages of White women (40) and White men (34.8). It is also less than those of Black women (29.5) and Black men (25.5) in New York State.

- In New York City there are now more Puerto Ricans who were born in the United States (49.4%) than were born in Puerto Rico (48.1%). A very high proportion of Puerto Ricans still speaks Spanish at home--91%. At the same time, a higher proportion of Puerto Ricans (compared with other Latino groups) indicate that they speak English "well to very well". Seventy per cent of Puerto Ricans, but only 60% of Cubans, 42% of Mexicans, and 55% of other Spanish place themselves in this category.

- On the whole, educational levels, relative to Whites and Blacks, are low for Puerto Ricans. However, if we look at the proportion of Puerto Ricans 23 and over who were enrolled in post-secondary education in 1979 we find that in the youngest age group, 23-34, there is a stirring of activity, while those over 35 are underrepresented relative to Whites and Blacks.

- Three things are evident in the Puerto Rican labor force: (1) the majority of Puerto Rican males are employed (58%), although this rate is lower than the rate for White males (66%); (2) the unemployment rate of Puerto Rican men is two times that of White men; and (3) Puerto Rican men are "out of the labor force" to a greater degree (34%) than White men (30%). The pattern for Blacks is similar to that of Puerto Ricans. For Puerto Rican women, the most significant fact is

their low labor force participation rates --66% of Puerto Rican women are not in the labor force, compared to 53% of White women and 49% of Black women.

- Puerto Rican families have the highest poverty rates even when one controls for household structure. The median annual family income of Puerto Ricans in 1979 was $8,705, compared with $21,515 for Whites and $12,210 for Blacks.

- The highest proportion of female-headed households (FHH) are in the Puerto Rican community (33% versus 8% for Whites and 30% for Blacks). This pattern is strongly affected by regional factors, as the national pattern indicates that the Black community has the highest proportion of FHH. Puerto Rican FHH are less likely to be in the labor force and more likely to depend on public assistance than either White or Black FHH. Only 25% of the heads of female-headed households in the Puerto Rican community are in the labor force, contrasted with 51% of White and 54% of Black FHH. The majority of the Puerto Rican FHH (57%) rely solely on public assistance to cope with their difficult economic situation; comparable figures for White and Black women who head their own families are 9% and 28%, respectively.

- Some 62% of Puerto Rican men in couple families receive their income solely from salaries and wages, compared with 29% of White men, who can rely on other additional sources of income, such as interest, dividends, and social security.

- Only 23% of Puerto Rican households are single or other "nonfamily," compared with 34% and 42%, respectively, for Blacks and Whites. Conversely, 77% of Puerto Rican households are families (couple, female-headed, or male-headed), compared to 66% for Blacks and 58% for Whites.

- Relative to Whites and Blacks, there are fewer Puerto Rican men and women in the generally higher-paid professions, as managers and officials, as technicians, and as clerical or office workers. Until 1970, government had not served the role of employer of last resort for Puerto Ricans, but since that time, government, particularly local government, has improved its role, employing about 19% of the Puerto Rican work force. Government employs a larger portion of the Black work force (29%) and a smaller portion of the White work force (15%).

- There is a general conclusion to be drawn from the data: by the standard statistical indicators, the "average" Puerto Rican in New York City is not doing very well relative to the White population. This also parallels the national picture found of Puerto Ricans in the United States. Moreover, recent studies indicate that the economic situation of Puerto Ricans in the United States has worsened with time.

- However, the data reviewed here raise a number of questions about the conclusions or inferences that are derived from these data and about the methodological limitations of the data. There is a basic problem with most of the data collected and reported on Puerto Ricans. The data tend to represent a snapshot of the community at one point in time. This snapshot is very narrowly focused, and it omits significant dimensions of the situation of most Puerto Ricans. Because the data focus on given places and points in time, they do not capture the shifts in population that form a very important factor in the case of Puerto Ricans and other shifting migrations. It might be inferred from the data reviewed here and elsewhere that Puerto Ricans are increasingly becoming members of an "underclass." However, despite its increasing use in policy circles, the term has a number of problems: it has been roundly criticized, and it is difficult to define. It is, therefore, difficult to determine who is and who is not a member of the underclass. In addition, its behavioral implications have not been substantiated. Corcoran and others have found that the majority of the persistently poor do not fit underclass stereotypes and that it is changes in economic circumstances that lead to changes in psychological attitudes and not vice versa. Moreover, it is unclear what proportion of those in designated underclass areas have recently moved there and what proportion have been there for some time. Finally, the underclass concept has spawned "workfare" solutions (programs that require that welfare recipients work in exchange for the assistance received), but these have had mixed results in New York. Thus, it appears that the underclass concept has provided another diversion from the real problems--how to employ all members of the society effectively and how to deal with the long-term joblessness that has become a chronic condition for increasing numbers of people in the economy.

Executive Summary
The Puerto Rican Family and Poverty: Complex Paths to Poor Outcomes

Douglas T. Gurak & Luis M. Falcón

- This report utilizes several sources of data on the migration, family formation, and labor force histories of Puerto Rican women in an effort to better understand the sources of the high incidence of poverty in this population. The forces contributing to observed patterns of migration, family structure, and labor force participation of Puerto Rican women are intricately intertwined. Although the complexity of the relationships cautions us against arriving at sweeping generalizations concerning the underlying causes of Puerto Rican poverty, several points stand out and warrant attention.

- The selectivity of the migration process results in an over representation of women in the New York region who are characterized by traits associated with poverty. Those with less labor force experience, less education, more children, and more marital instability are the ones most likely to migrate to the mainland. Those with more stable unions, fewer children and more education are the ones most likely to return to the island. This double selectivity process clearly contributes to the high rates of female headship and poverty in the New York region's Puerto Rican population. This pattern of selectivity is not typical of other migrations. Understanding this pattern of migration will require some careful thinking about the underlying social and economic processes that have shaped the migration.

- Female headship is both extremely common among Puerto Rican women and closely associated with the prevalence of poverty. This report suggests that both the processes generating the migration of Puerto Ricans and current conditions foster the high rate of Puerto Rican female headship. Puerto Rican women with fathers who were either not employed or not present when the respondent was growing up are more likely to be female heads, indicating that the outcome has roots spanning many years and, in many cases, an ocean. There are many more proximate influences on the process of becoming a female head among Puerto Rican women. Employment and training experiences during the unions are negatively related to female headship status. Couples who exhibit more positive educational and employment characteristics are less likely to experience a marital dissolution. This finding firmly links the mechanisms generating a high rate of female heads of household to those contributing to the education and labor force problems of Puerto Rican men and women. It must also be noted that other aspects of the Puerto Rican situation play a role in shaping

family outcomes. The apparent insulating effect of being non-catholic requires considerable further thought. The most outstanding aspect of the impact of religion on headship status is its independence from other factors. Clearly cultural processes that go beyond the institutions of education and employment are at work.

- Being a female head of household greatly constrains the ability to be in the labor force, as does recent fertility. English ability and specialized training significantly increase the odds of being in the labor force. High school and college education dramatically decrease the odds of being unemployed. Given the evidence on the selectivity of the migration process, some of these correlates, such as the tendency to be a female head or not to be highly educated, are rooted in the migration process. Nevertheless, clear points of intervention in the present do stand out: 1) specialized training, 2) english language training, 3) child care arrangements, and 4) improved retention of Puerto Ricans in formal educational programs (and the improvement of those programs).

- The results concerning the selectivity of the migration of Puerto Rican women between New York and Puerto Rico suggest some new avenues of analysis. Most studies have focused on the role of labor markets in shaping both the migration and current economic situation of Puerto Ricans (and other migrants). That approach is both valid and useful, however it is clear that other forces are also at work. Puerto Rican and Mainland (especially New York) societies are linked along many dimensions. Marital and family status factors drive the migration decisions of a significant proportion of Puerto Rican women. While the labor market situation of the New York region may not provide adequate opportunities for employment for many women, that area is still seen as a relatively desirable destination for women who are poorly suited for competing in the labor market due to their lower educational attainment, low level of employment experience, and family situations (young children and no spouse). Analysis of the labor market situation of Puerto Rican women in the New York region without regard for the role of migration in shaping cross-sectional distributions will lead to biased perspectives. It is hoped that future efforts to unravel the many puzzling aspects of Puerto Rican Poverty will make more effective use of data and concepts concerning both individual and structural conditions.

Executive Summary
Developing A Community Based Strategy to Address the Persistence of Poverty in the U.S. Puerto Rican Community

National Puerto Rican Coalition, Inc.

- NPRC has developed a strategy to involve its network of community organizations in a coordinated series of projects to address the persistence of poverty in U.S. Puerto Rican communities.

- Social and economic indicators for U.S. Puerto Ricans have deteriorated severely over the last thirty years.

- Puerto Ricans' unique economic and migratory history and their concentration in de-industrializing sectors and cities in the northeast and midwest may explain these differences. Indicators for Puerto Ricans resemble those for urban Blacks more than those for other Hispanics.

- General public policy areas identified as being most receptive to intervention include: educational reform, jobs training, application of the 1988 welfare reform (including child care legislation), community economic development programs (including banking legislation and affordable housing) and civil rights enforcement.

- To implement a comprehensive strategy to deal effectively with the issue of the persistence of poverty, NPRC has developed a four-pronged approach in the areas of Advocacy, Research, Institutional Development and Public Awareness. These will complement an increased level of activity in NPRC's programs in Community Economic Development in local sites around the country.

Clara E. Rodríguez,
Fordham University

BEYOND THE CENSUS DATA: A PORTRAIT OF THE COMMUNITY[1]

In this paper we will examine the perspective from which Puerto Ricans are often viewed: the perspective of the data. Utilizing the best available data, we will look at the Puerto Rican community in terms of the standard indicators used in the literature. The data are first presented, then analyzed and interpreted. In examining the data critically, going beneath and beyond it, we can explore questions the data do not answer, and the methodological limitations of data alone are demonstrated. The purpose of this approach is to provide as full a picture as possible of the Puerto Rican community; the reader must remember that the data alone are not the people.

In general, the socioeconomic data on Puerto Ricans and Blacks paint pictures that are similarly distressing. But in almost all of the tables generated for this paper, Puerto Ricans have ranked below Blacks. However, this paper departs from convention in that it downplays comparisons between Puerto Ricans and Blacks, for a number of reasons. First, the issue is not who is more disadvantaged, but that both groups are considerably disadvantaged relative to Whites. Second, the primary purpose of the paper is not to highlight relative disadvantages, but to examine more closely what can be inferred from the data about the situation of Puerto Ricans.

There appears to be an emerging trend in contemporary public policy analysis to state that Puerto Ricans "have become more similar to blacks overtime" (Tienda and Jensen, 1986: 41). While it may be true that, in a narrow data sense, Puerto Ricans and Blacks are similar, in a cultural sense, Puerto Ricans are quite distinct from Blacks. Puerto Ricans speak another language, come from a cultural ambience that is more Latin American than North American, and have immigration patterns that are quite distinct

[1] Originally published as Chapter 2 of Puerto Ricans: Born in the U.S.A., Boston & London: Unwyn Hyman, 1989. Reprinted with permission.

from those of Black Americans. A danger of comparing Blacks and Puerto Ricans in this way is that it may lead to similar conclusions and policies for both, when distinct approaches are clearly called for, for instance, in education policy.

Advantages and Disadvantages of the Data

The census analysis presented here focuses, in the main, on the Puerto Rican population in New York City, for several reasons. For a number of decades, NYC was the place where the majority of Puerto Ricans in the United States lived. Second, the concentration of Puerto Ricans in NYC is still greater than elsewhere. Third, most of the research on Puerto Ricans has focused on Puerto Ricans in New York.[1] The use of New York City census data also presents certain limitations, however, most important of which is the recurring undercount problem.[2] A second limitation is that the analysis of the decennial census data is, in the main, limited to crosssectional presentation of data. As such, changes over time are not covered and the time order of the variables is not explored.

On the other hand, these census data do give us a fairly accurate picture of the way things are for Puerto Ricans today. The data are relatively recent and are based on the largest counts possible. The data also allow us to see the relative situation of Puerto Ricans vis-à-vis other groups. Thus, we have a reliable picture of where Puerto Ricans stand today relative to other groups measured by the same indicators. Also, with regard to the undercount, were an estimate of the undercount included in this analysis, the already difficult picture evident with these unadjusted figures would in all probability be more accentuated,

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[1] Also, New York City is the area with which I am most familiar, as a second generation Puerto Rican born and raised in the South Bronx; therefore personal insights will give greater depth and direct resonance to the analysis.

[2] In August 1980, New York State, New York City, and other plaintiffs filed suit against the U.S. Bureau of the Census, claiming that the Bureau had undercounted the city and state populations. As of 1984, this litigation was still active.

because those who are not counted by the census tend to be marginal to the labor force or to have low incomes.

It should be borne in mind, however, that these are New York City figures and that today there are more Puerto Ricans living outside of New York City than in New York City. A comparison, along selected indicators, of Puerto Ricans in New York City and in the United States as a whole indicates the New York City population is in some regards quite different from the national Puerto Rican population. As Table 2.1 indicates, in 1980 mean household income was considerably lower in New York City and the proportion of female heads of household, and of individuals in poverty, was considerably higher. Differences in unemployment rates were also evident, but these differences may be related to the lower labor force participation rates of Puerto Ricans in New York City. The New York City Puerto Rican population is similar to Puerto Rican Populations in all states in that its education, income, labor force status, and poverty rates were generally worse than those of other groups. Nonetheless, there are areas where the Puerto Rican profile is quite different from that in New York - for example, in Florida, Texas, and California-and where Puerto Ricans showed better scores than other minorities.[1]

The Data Picture

Demography. In 1985 there were 2.562 million Puerto Ricans residing in the United States and another 3.270 million in Puerto Rico. Together, the two groups constituted 28.86% of all the Latinos within U.S. borders (see Figure 2.1).[2] In New York City

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[1] In Texas, for example, Puerto Ricans have a higher labor force participation rate (73.52%) than Mexicans (61.93%), Cubans (71.4%), other Spanish (63.9%), Blacks (63.9%), and even Whites (64.9%). In addition, in the percentages with four or more years of college, working as professionals, and in per capita income, they are exceeded only by Whites and Cubans (1980 Census, General Social and Economic Characteristics, Texas, PC80-1-C45).

[2] The figure for Puerto Rico is based on Current Population Reports, "Local Population Estimates" (U.S. Census, July 1984). The figure for Puerto Ricans in the states come from Current Population Reports, "Population Characteristics" (Series P-20, No.403, issued December 1985, based on the March 1985 current

in 1980, there were 1,036,680 Puerto Ricans, constituting the largest Hispanic group (60.45% of all Latinos).[1] Since Puerto Ricans constitute 12.67% of the total New York City population, one out of every eight New Yorkers is Puerto Rican. The majority of NYC Puerto Ricans live in the Bronx (37%) and in Brooklyn (32%), with smaller numbers in Manhattan (19.71%), Queens (9.50%), and Staten Island (1.29%) (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1980).

Sex. Overall, in the NYC Puerto Rican population, there are about 54 women for every 46 men.[2] If we control for age, we find that the numbers of males and females born are roughly the same. However, at about the age of puberty, males begin to disappear. This continues through the older ages, when women begin to outlive men. Thus, by the time Puerto Ricans reach the age of 30, for every five Puerto Rican women there are four Puerto Rican men (see Figure 2.2).[3]

Age. Puerto Ricans are quite young, on the whole. Their median age of 23.7 is considerably less than the median ages of White women (40) and White men (34.8). It is also less than those

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population survey).
Unless otherwise indicated, the other data cited are derived from the Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) from the 1980 5% census sample. It will be referred to throughout this volume as 1980 PUMS. Totals in the tables differ from published census data because they are based on sample data.

[1] The terms Hispanic and Latino/a will be used interchangeably in this text. See Hayes-Bautista and Chapa (1987) and Treviño (1987), who take opposing positions on which term should be preferred.

[2] Interestingly enough, the same imbalance does not exist in Puerto Rico, where there are 49 men for every 51 women. Census of Population and Housing, 1980 Puerto Rico, indicates there were 1,556,727 males (or 48.7%) to 1,639,793 females (51.3%) in 1979. The NYC Puerto Rican ratio is the lowest of all groups except Blacks.

[3] The sex ratios are derived from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1980 Census of Population, General Social and Economic Characteristics, New York.

of Black women (29.5) and Black men (25.5) in New York State.[1] This, plus high fertility levels for correspondingly younger Puerto Rican women, means that the Puerto Rican population will grow significantly in the next few decades.

Birthplace. In New York City there are now more Puerto Ricans who were born in the united States (49.4%) than were born in Puerto Rico (48.1%). However, the difference in the sample is not large.

Language. A very high proportion of Puerto Ricans still speaks Spanish at home-91%. This is a higher percentage than for any other Spanish-origin group in New York City (for Cubans and other Spanish, the figure is 90%; it is 64% for Mexicans.[2] At the same time, a higher proportion of Puerto Ricans (compared with other Latino groups) indicate that they speak English "well to very well" (see Figure 2.3). As Figure 2.3 indicates, 70% of Puerto Ricans, but only 60% of Cubans, 42% of Mexicans, and 55% of other Spanish place themselves in this category. Correspondingly, proportionately fewer Puerto Ricans indicate that they speak English "not well or not at all" -Puerto Ricans, 21%, compared to Cubans, 29%, Mexicans, 22%, and other Spanish, 34%. (The proportion speaking "only English" at home is only 9% for Puerto Ricans, compared to 10% for Cubans and other Spanish, and 36% for Mexicans.) Thus, Puerto Ricans report greater fluency in both languages than other Latino groups.

Education. Skimming over the education data, which will be covered in detail in a subsequent chapter, we see that Hispanics have a median educational attainment of 10.3 grades, compared with 12.3 for Whites and 12.2 for Blacks.[3] Moreover, there is a very high dropout rate for Hispanics. Table 2.2 shows the distribution

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[1] The figures on median age are derived from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1980 Census of Population, General Social and Economic Characteristics, New York.

[2] Grenier's (1981) data also show high Spanish retention for Puerto Ricans, but Cubans in his national sample showed even higher retention rates than the NYC data.

[3] The figures on median education are derived from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1980 Census of Population, General Social and Economic Characteristics, New York.

of educational attainment of Puerto Ricans over 25 years old compared with comparable Whites and Blacks.[1] For this older age group, differences between Puerto Rican men and women are minor. So, on the whole, educational levels, relative to Whites and Blacks, are low for Puerto Ricans. However, if we look at the proportion of Puerto Ricans 23 and over who were enrolled in post-secondary education in 1979-that is, the nontraditional students-we find that in the youngest age group, 23-34, there is stirring of activity, while those over 35 are underrepresented relative to Whites and Blacks. Thus, even though the numbers are small, these data suggest that younger Puerto Ricans may pursue education later in life.

The Economic Dimension

Income. The median annual family income of Puerto Ricans in 1979 was $8,705, compared with $21,515 for Whites and $12,210 for Blacks. Thus Whites had a median family income that was almost 2.5 times that of Puerto Ricans. Mean and household income measures diminish the gap somewhat, but in no case is the gap significantly less; no mater how you slice it, the income of Puerto Ricans is less than half that of Whites.[2]

What is apparent from Figure 2.4 is that the distribution of income for Puerto Ricans is quite different from that for Whites.

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[1] The classificatory schema of Puerto Ricans, Whites, and Blacks is problematic, for it mixes racial and ethnic categorizations. More preferable might be terms that highlight the stronger cultural (as opposed to racial) distinction between Puerto Ricans and other groups-for example, terms such as Euro-Americans and Afro-Americans. However, such terms are also problematic because they convey different meanings to different people, for instance, some might understand the terms above to refer only to second-generation Europeans or Africans.

[2] Rodríguez (1984a) found that the income gap between Hispanics and Whites in New York State narrowed somewhat with increasing age; however, during the prime earning years of 45-54, Puerto Rican income was still only 52.73% of what Whites earned during those years. Díaz (1984:24) found that the income gap between Hispanics and Whites at the national level fluctuated between 1972 and 1982 but had not improved. In 1982 Hispanics in the United States earned 66% as much as Whites. More recently, Tienda and Jensen (1986) found that the income gap between Puerto Ricans and non-Hispanics Whites grew between 1970 and 1980.

There is, in the case of Puerto Ricans, a concentration of income at the lower end of the scale, while among Whites the income spread is greater. Puerto Rican and Black income distributions are more similar, except that Blacks have larger proportions in the upper-middle to upper reaches of the income scale.

Work force. Why is income so low for Puerto Ricans as a whole? Who's working and who's not? Table 2.3 compares the labor forces of Puerto Rican, White, and Black males in NYC in 1979. Three things are evident in the Puerto Rican labor force: (1) the majority of Puerto Rican males are employed (58%), although this rate is lower than the rate for White males (66%); (2) the unemployment rate of Puerto Rican men is two times that of White men; and (3) Puerto Rican men are "out of the labor force" to a greater degree (34%) than White men (30%). The pattern for Blacks is similar to that of Puerto Ricans.

For Puerto Rican women, the most significant fact is their low labor force participation rates -66% of Puerto Rican women are not in the labor force, compared to 53% of White women and 49% of Black women. Thus, Puerto Rican women are proportionately less involved in the world of taxed work (Table 2.4).

Household structure and income. Given the income picture, it comes as no surprise that Puerto Rican families have the highest poverty rates even when one controls for household structure (see Figure 2.5). Regardless of whether Puerto Rican families are headed by women, by men, or by couples, they are still disproportionately represented below the poverty line. This is true whether we compare Puerto Rican families with White, Black, or other Latino families.

Female-headed households. The rise in the number of Puerto Rican households headed by women is often cited as an important variable in the persistently low family income levels of Puerto Ricans. The distribution of families by household structure shows that the highest proportion of female-headed households (FHH) are in the Puerto Rican community (33% versus 8% for Whites and 30% for Blacks). This pattern is strongly affected by regional factors, as the national pattern indicates that the Black community has the highest proportion of FHH. Nonetheless, it is surprising that, in

absolute numbers, there are more Puerto Rican female-headed households in poverty. This is astounding when you consider that there are many more White than Puerto Rican females.

Puerto Rican FHH are less likely to be in the labor force and more likely to depend on public assistance than either White or Black FHH. Only 25% of the heads of female-headed households in the Puerto Rican community are in the labor force, contrasted with 51% of White and 54% of Black FHH. Wages and salaries do not provide the main source of income for any of the three groups-although Black women rely more on this source than either of the other two groups. Because Puerto Rican FHH derive less of their income from other sources (e.g., alimony, private wealth, child support payment), they depend more on public assistance. Thus, while 34% of White and 20% of Black FHH derive their income from other sources or a combination of sources, only 16% of the Puerto Rican FHH do likewise. The majority of the Puerto Rican FHH (57%) rely solely on public assistance to cope with their difficult economic situation; comparable figures for White and Black women who head their own families are 9% and 28%, respectively.

Couple families. In contrast to Puerto Rican FHH is the fact that the majority of Puerto Rican men in couple families rely on salary or wage income to a greater degree than comparable men in the White or Black communities. Some 62% of Puerto Rican men in couple families receive their income solely from salaries and wages, compared with 29% of White men, who can rely on other additional sources of income, such as interest, dividends, and social security. In addition, Puerto Rican men in couple families also participate in the labor force to a higher degree than do White and Black men; respective figures here are 82%, 75%, and 81%. They also participate to a slightly higher degree in the armed forces. Thus, Puerto Rican men in intact families are working or looking for work to a greater degree than others.

Other families. While the form of Puerto Rican families is changing, the importance of families seems secure. The household structure data show that, even though Puerto Ricans have the highest percentage of female-headed households and the middle position for the traditional "couple head" families, they have the

lowest percentage of nonfamily households. Only 23% of Puerto Rican households are single or other "nonfamily," compared with 34% and 42%, respectively, for Blacks and Whites. Conversely, 77% of Puerto Rican households are families (couple, female-headed, or male-headed), compared to 66% for Blacks and 58% for Whites. Thus, proportionately more Puerto Ricans live in households that are families, compared with the other groups. This may be related to the lower labor force participation rate of Puerto Rican women.

Occupations. There are no real surprises when we look at the occupational data. Relative to Whites and Blacks, there are fewer Puerto Rican men and women in the generally higher-paid professions, as managers and officials, as technicians, and as clerical or office workers. Correspondingly, there are proportionately more Puerto Rican men and women working as laborers or factory operatives. Some details are of interest:

(1) very high concentrations of Puerto Rican women, and to a lesser degree of Puerto Rican men, in factory operative occupations, despite the serious decline in New York City over the last 20 years of manufacturing jobs;

(2) an unexpectedly high (relatively speaking) proportion of the Puerto Rican female work force found in the crafts/foremen and laborers categories;

(3) a relatively good representation of Puerto Rican men in crafts or as foremen and as clerical workers;

(4) healthy proportions of Puerto Rican men and women in the sales occupations; and

(5) very low proportions of Puerto Rican women in service occupations or in private household work.

Government employment. The pattern of government work is of interest because government has often served as the "employer of last resort" for Blacks. Rodriguez (1979) notes that until 1970, government had not served this role for Puerto Ricans, but since that time, government, particularly local government, has improved its role, employing about 19% of the Puerto Rican work force. Government employs a larger portion of the Black work force (29%) and a smaller portion of the White work force (15%).

Interpretation of the Data

The General Picture

The data picture drawn in this chapter is consistent with that found in other studies.[1] Although there may be some minor deviations, there is a general conclusion to be drawn: by the standard statistical indicators, the "average" Puerto Rican in New York City is not doing very well relative to the White population. This also parallels the national picture found of Puerto Ricans in the United States (Tienda and Jensen, 1986; Tienda and Lii, 1987:2; Bean and Tienda, 1988). Moreover, recent studies indicate that the economic situation of Puerto Ricans in the United States has worsened with time.[2]

However, the data reviewed here raise a number of questions about the conclusions or inferences that are derived from these data and about the methodological limitations of the data. It is important to discuss these questions for a number of reasons. First, this type of questioning often points the way for future research. Second, the inferences made about data often determine the direction of current policy and research; therefore, those inferences should be examined carefully. Third, many of the issues raised may be known to researchers, but they are all too often initially acknowledged and then abandoned when the research gets under way or when the results are explained. It is important that these issues be raised along with the presentation of research conclusions, because that is often where users of research and

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[1] See, for example, New York City Department of City Planning (1982), Díaz (1986), Wagenheim (1975), and Mann and Salvo (1984).

[2] Tienda and Jensen (1986), in their analysis of the 5% decennial census data (1960-80), found Puerto Ricans in the states to be the only group to experience a drop in real family income between 1970 and 1980 and to show a steadily increasing concentration in the lowest income quartile (other groups compared were Blacks, Mexicans, other Hispanics, and Native Americans) (see also Tienda and Lii, 1987:2). Bean and Tienda (1988) also find Puerto Ricans to have declining economic well-being, as measured by falling labor force participation, high unemployment, poverty, and declines in real family income.

policymakers go directly.

In the following section, I will raise questions that are not answered by the data, suggest avenues for further research, and point out methodological limitations of this and similar data sets, all within a policy-relevant context. I will focus first on the findings presented, and then will examine four methodological issues: the need for a wide-angle lens, a shifting population, the underclass, and unmeasured characteristics.

Beyond and Beneath the Data Variables

Sex and disappearing men. The one basic question that must be raised with regard to the unbalanced sex ratio is, Where have all the good Puerto Rican men gone? There are a few explanations. Some may just be absent from the census count. But if so, why are fewer men counted than women as they get older? It is possible that the men die of natural causes or as a result of hazardous conditions to a greater degree than women, or that they disappear into unrecorded street activities. They may also stop identifying themselves as Puerto Rican and thus leave the census data in this way, or they may leave the NYC population. Yet why would either of these latter two possibilities occur more for men than for women? Adding to the mystery of the disappearing males is the fact that recently greater numbers of males are migrating from Puerto Rico (Junta de Planificación, 1986). The answers to these questions must necessarily affect policy research and program planning, especially with regard to FHH.

Age and its future significance. The young age trends and high fertility rates indicate that the Puerto Rican population will grow faster than other groups for several decades. This trend, combined with that of Whites toward smaller families and out-migration, will, in all probability, make Puerto Ricans a more significant part of the future New York City and New York State population. Given the high rate of female-headed households and associated welfare dependency, the city and the state would do well to develop policies to assist this growing sector of the electorate.

Birthplace and assimilation. Can we interpret the larger numbers of Puerto Ricans born in the United States as a sign that

Puerto Ricans are on their way to assimilating out of existence? As the data on language proficiencies suggest, and subsequent material will substantiate, this does not appear to be the case.[1] Particularly intriguing in this regard is the fact that there is higher retention-relative to other Latino groups in NYC-of "Spanish at home." (This in a population where more people were born in the states than in Puerto Rico.) More important, however, is the policy research point raised by this fact: birthplace is not an absolute determinant of socialization for Puerto Ricans-because of ongoing back-and-forth movements to the island.[2]

Education and success. The relationships among educational attainment, English-language proficiency, and income and occupational attainments have tended to be anomalous for Puerto Ricans. In this data set, we saw that Puerto Rican English proficiency levels are high relative to other Latino groups who fare better in the New York City economy. Nelson and Tienda (1985:64) similarly found in their national sample that "Puerto Ricans combine the highest levels of English proficiency with the lowest levels of socioeconomic achievement" -this compared with Cubans, Mexicans, and other Spanish.[3] Other studies have argued that, even when education is equal, Hispanics/Puerto Ricans earn less than other groups (Díaz, 1986: 31; Hernández, 1983). The most recent and extensive national study found Puerto Ricans to be economically disadvantaged, relative to Mexicans, even though they had slightly higher educational attainments (Tienda and Lii,

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[1] The majority of Puerto Ricans born in the states still speak Spanish at home and identify strongly as "Spanish." All other Latino groups in New York City had lower proportions born in the states, except for Mexicans, 60% of whom were born in the states.

[2] One particular family comes to mind that has had three generations born in the states, but none of these generations has ever been raised or socialized primarily in the states.

[3] Tienda (1983a) finds that for Hispanics, in general, English skills are necessary but not sufficient to bring about earnings parity with the majority White population (see also Grenier, 1981; Tienda and Neidert, 1984).

1987:2). These results raise doubts about the easy policy response of some human capital theorists who argue that increasing education and English proficiency are the answer to the "Puerto Rican problem." This also introduces questions about the quality of education received by different groups.

The difference between education and wisdom. Low educational attainments are apparently not the whole story, nor do these data allow for the generally accepted distinction within the Puerto Rican community between wisdom and knowledge. As most people within minority communities know, there are many "academies of learning" beyond those officially registered with the State Board of Regents. Indeed, it is my experience that these noncredentialed but "street-smart" or wise individuals are common and often successful features of the community. While their knowledge many not be measurable by years of education, wisdom is often seen to have flourished in its place. These unsung heroes and intellectuals do not appear in the data, but they appear in every family, on every street corner, at all social gatherings, and, certainly, in everyone's biography.

Household structure and the destruction of the Puerto Rican family. On the issue of female-headed households, it is important not to conclude that the high proportion of FHH implies the destruction of the Puerto Rican family. We could no more conclude that this represents the destruction of the Puerto Rican family than we could conclude that the very high proportion (42%) of nonfamily households in White communities sounds the death knell of the White family. Nor can we conclude that children in female-headed families necessarily receive less love or attention than those in households headed by couples. Indeed, they may receive more if women are not working, or if the families are part of a familial or fraternal support system, than if the families are isolated, nuclear families. Or, they may receive less.

The point is, we cannot generalize about family life from data based just on family structure. There have always been families headed by women-because of desertion, death, separation, or female choice. There is no historical evidence that sustains any generalization other than that life becomes economically difficult

for a woman alone with children. And this is what we see in the data. This is not to deny the difficulties of raising children alone (for men or women); rather, it is an attempt to remove the veil of psychological encumbrances that often obscures the term female-headed household. This term has become somewhat synonymous with insinuations about childhood deprivation, psychological as well as economic. It conveys immediate unmet needs for all concerned. This is not necessarily the case, although one can always find examples to prove the point.[1] The real issue here is poverty, not FHH, and this is what should be addressed.

Female-headed households, Puerto Rican men. It is also important for policymakers to distinguish the economic situation of Puerto Rican female heads of households from that of White female heads of households. It is apparent from the data that there are few sources of support, beyond governmental funds, for Puerto Rican female heads of households. Darity and Myers (1987) conclude that the poorest families, even after the receipt of government transfer payments, were Puerto Rican female-headed households. It is important to see the economic situation of these households in relation to the economic situation of Puerto Rican men. There are apparently no large support payments forthcoming from men who have disappeared, whose income is insufficient to cover their own needs, who don't have jobs or income, or who disclaim responsibility. White female heads of households, on the other hand, rely to a greater degree on other sources or a combination of sources of support.

Sources of support and earning a living. On this point, the data don't tell us why, or how, some groups of people manage (more than others) to acquire income from sources other than salary. It appears that a higher proportion of Puerto Ricans (37%), compared

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[1] Pelto et. al. (1982) find in their study of 153 Puerto Rican households in New Hartford, Connecticut, that single-parent households were no more or less effective than dual-parent households in coping with the stresses of urban life. Indeed, dual-parent, unemployed households evidenced the highest levels of psychiatric problems. Capello's (1986) recent study in New York also revealed patterns of successful as well as unsuccessful coping styles for Puerto Rican female-headed households.

with Whites (29%) derive their income solely from wages. A higher proportion of Whites derive their income from wages plus interest, dividends, social security, or other combinations. Puerto Ricans also rely more on public assistance and report "no income" to a higher degree.

Thus, Puerto Ricans rely to a greater degree on public income that some define as charity; Whites, on income that is not directly gained as a result of their labor. Some savings or investments may have originated as labor income, but other investments or savings may have come from inheritances or other class advantages. Part of the difference in income sources may be due to age and household structure, but another part of the differential may be the result of inherited wealth. (This gives support to the saying that "you have to have money to make money" -at least you have to be able to borrow it.) Whatever the exact reasons for the divergent patterns, the data suggest that Puerto Ricans may not benefit as much as others from booms in the financial sector of the economy.

Income, resources, and the underground economy. The intriguing and unanswered question, of course, is not how Puerto Rican families receive what they receive, but how they survive on what they receive.[1] Puerto Ricans have less income than any other group. In addition, Puerto Rican households need two workers to equal the income of White households with one worker.[2] The question thus is not how many people are on welfare, but how it is possible to subsist without it. There is, of course, the possibility of a strong underground economy, but no one knows how many people participate in it and to what degree. There are also, however, other untold, heroic stories of the Puerto Rican community-how enough for one becomes enough for two; how old curtains become dresses; how restaurant work yields not just a minimum wage but food for the family; how ecologically life is

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[1] See Valentine (1978) for an excellent discussion of how different families, with distinct household structures, in a low-income Afro-American community devise ways of coping with limited incomes.

[2] Rodríguez (1984a: Table 3) shows that in New York State Hispanic families must have two workers to equal the income of White families with one worker.

(must be) lived; how friends, family, and community nourish the spirit where elsewhere it is broken; and how all of this is accomplished without injury to dignity. This is all outside the data and should be researched.

Labor force participation and informal economies. The decline in the labor force participation rates of Puerto Rican women is intriguing, because demographic changes between 1960 and 1970 would have predicted an increase in these rates. These changes include greater educational attainment, greater numbers of FHH, greater proportion born in the states, and lower proportion of women with children under 6 years old (Santana-Cooney and Colón-Warren, 1984; Barry-Figueroa, 1988; Meléndez, 1987). In addition, it is unusual that the labor force participation rates of Puerto Rican women would have declined at a time when all women have increased their labor force participation (Santana-Cooney and Colón-Warren, 1984). Sánchez-Korrol (1983), in her study of the pre-World War II Puerto Rican community, found Puerto Rican women were strong contributors to the economy of the household in "less accounted for" ways. They did factory piecework at home, took in boarders, and cared for other people's children, in addition to being the core of the support networks that assisted new migrants in finding housing, jobs, medical services, schools, churches, and so on. In the 1950s, Puerto Rican women had higher labor force participation rates than any other group of women, yet in 1980 their rate was the lowest of all (Ríos, 1985).

The decline of manufacturing industries in New York City after 1970 (particularly in the garment sector) reduced the possibilities for doing piecework at home. It may be that Puerto Rican women opted, in light of few and diminishing employment opportunities, to stay home and be traditional mothers and wives. Meléndez's (1987) analysis is suggestive in this regard. He finds that not only were the majority of Puerto Rican women concentrated in manufacturing between 1950 and 1970, but that many did not make the transition to service sector employment-especially those in prime age groups. The presence of children also affects women's decision to work. In New York State only 31% of Hispanic women with children under 6 were labor force participants. As children got older, the

participation rates of Hispanic women increased to 45% (i.e., for those with children between 6 and 17). However, this rate was considerably below that of comparable White and Black women, whose rates were 60% and 67%, respectively (Rodríguez, 1984a).

The questions for future research here include whether the initial decline and the still lower labor force participation rates for Puerto Rican women reflect more women working "off the books," taking care of other people's children, selling home-produced goods, and distributing or manufacturing products or services in the informal sector.[1] Another question is whether Puerto Rican women have chosen families over paid work or whether the choice had been made for them. Also, with regard to labor force nonparticipation rates of Puerto Rican men and women, one wonders if the reasons for nonparticipation are the same for all groups. Are, for example, men in all groups marginalized (i.e., discouraged workers) to the same degree? Are they missing from the labor force because they are students, or because they are engaged in underground economies? These are avenues for further investigation.

Occupations and sedimentation. One question left unanswered by the aggregate data is whether there is a settling process within each occupational category that accounts for low incomes. That is, if we were to examine each category, would we find Puerto Ricans concentrated at the lower income end of each disaggregated occupational category? If this is the case, even those Puerto Ricans within the professional category would tend to occupy the lowest ranks of this category. Are Puerto Ricans routinely relegated to the lowest strata within social class subgroups? This question cannot be answered for Puerto Ricans without further disaggregation and analysis of the data. However, there is evidence from other sources that this may be the case.

The National Committee on Pay Equity (1987) took note of occupational settling or sedimentation patterns in its national

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[1] See also Santana-Cooney and Colón-Warren (1984) and Ríos (1985); for an analysis of women in Puerto Rico's informal economy, see Petrovich and Laureano (1986).

analysis of 1980 census data. Barrera (1979) found this to be the case for Mexicans and Mexican-Americans in the southwest. Rodríguez (1984a:6-7) also found that within New York State there was considerable evidence of settling within occupations for Hispanic women. Within the sales occupations, a larger proportion of Hispanic women were employed as cashiers than as supervisors and sales representatives. In the administrative support area, there were proportionately fewer Hispanic women as computer operators; and in financial records, fewer were secretaries and typists and proportionately more were handling the mail. In the "Operatives" category, Hispanic women still "manned" or "tended" the nonprecision machines to a greater degree than White women. Only in the "Managerial and Professional Specialty" occupations was there a small but proportionately significant representation of Hispanic women in traditionally male-dominant occupations. Stafford (1983) has also found that in the major private industries, Blacks and Hispanics held subordinate positions and that there was significant segmentation within the public sector. Tienda (1985:73) also notes in her analysis of 1980 national census data that there is a tendency for Puerto Ricans to hold lower-paying jobs within broad occupational groupings: "Besides being unrepresented in executive, management and professional occupations, Puerto Rican men holding such jobs on a full-time, year-round basis in 1980 earned between 6-9000 less than similarly employed white men." She cautions, however, that these data do not take into account job tenure, training, experience, and other human capital characteristics. However, even in lower-skill jobs, Puerto Ricans make less money than comparable White workers.

Government: the steeplechase and the differential impact of cutbacks. The data on government employment are curious. Puerto Ricans and Blacks are more represented in government employment than Whites. Is it possible that, as Higgenbotham (1987) suggests, government employment represents the new dead-end world of work for

minorities?[1] Meléndez (1986) argues that minorities are overrepresented in those sectors of government that are declining and more subject to budget cuts. It would be ironic if working conditions in government have begun to decline just at the point where employment has begun to open up to minorities. Does government employment represent the new steeplechase for diminishing jobs?[2]

Methodological Issues

The Need for a Wide-Angle Lens

There is a basic problem with most of the data collected and reported on Puerto Ricans. The data tend to represent-as do the data presented in this paper-a snapshot of the community at one point in time. This snapshot is very narrowly focused, and it omits significant dimensions of the situation of most Puerto Ricans. Their unique situation requires that Puerto Ricans be viewed through a more "wide-angle lens" than has been generally applied, and that diverse situations of Puerto Ricans in the states be analyzed.

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[1] Of interest in this regard are Higgenbotham's (1987) findings on public to private sector shifts. She examines Black and White professional women in standard metropolitan statistical areas throughout the country and finds that although there has been a strong shift between 1970 and 1980 from public sector to private sector jobs, the rate of shift has been much faster for White than for Black women.

[2] The "steeplechase for jobs" refers to an oft-quoted New York Times article (March 31, 1981:1) on the movement of southern Blacks to northern cities. It argues that in the early part of the century, most Blacks lived on the farms and in the cities of the South, which were then severely depressed economically. After World War II, they migrated in great numbers to northern cities, just as the unskilled jobs there, which had been the basis for assimilating other members of poor minority groups, were giving out. In the 1970s Blacks increased their relative numbers in the troubled old cities and the declining industrial areas of the North, while many Whites were moving to the South and West to take jobs and to retire. Questions that are raised within this analogy include the following: Will there be the same perceptions about government that developed about urban areas? Will certain sectors in government be perceived as declining in efficiency because of the large numbers of Blacks and Hispanics working in these government areas?

Such a view of Puerto Ricans would incorporate activities in Puerto Rico as well as those in the states. For example, economic measures of Puerto Ricans' income in the states do not generally take into account land and/or houses Puerto Ricans own in Puerto Rico, nor do they consider informal sales of goods in Puerto Rico. Yet, both are quite common, and they influence estimates of income and net worth. Such a view would also examine contrasting situations-those in which Puerto Ricans have been successful, and those in which they have not. For example, a comparison of Puerto Ricans in California-where Puerto Ricans are relatively better off than other Latino groups-with Puerto Ricans in New York will provide greater insight into what the real problems are (see 1980 Census, General Social and Economic Characteristics, California, PC80-1-C6). Clearly, the more usual comparison of Puerto Ricans in New York with those in similarly troubled economies, such as a Chicago, will not yield startling new information.

Shifting Population

Because the data focus on given places and points in time, they do not capture the shifts in population that form a very important factor in the case of Puerto Ricans and other shifting migrations. For example, a longitudinal study that uses decennial census data and compares Puerto Ricans between 1940 and 1980 may find that little progress has been made in this 40-year period. However, it may be that a radically different population is being examined in each decennial period. It may be that the population is constantly being replenished by "newer" Puerto Ricans or "disguised" Puerto Ricans (i.e., illegal immigrants pretending to be Puerto Ricans). These newer immigrants may have less education, fewer skills, and lower English proficiency levels, which would tend to depress the indicators of "progress" (Morales, 1986: 219). It is also possible that more successful Puerto Ricans leave the city.[1] Do they go to other states or back to Puerto Rico?[2] We do

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[1] However, the question of whether the successful leave the pool or are successful because they leave the pool cannot be answered definitively without better migration histories and age controls.

not have, at present, a measure of the way in which the population changes because of additions and departures. This is an important consideration in the analysis of data and in the development of policy.

The Underclass

It might be inferred from the data reviewed here and elsewhere that Puerto Ricans are increasingly becoming members of an "underclass."[1] This term has had increasing usage in the policy arena, in part because of methodological advances in its definition and consequently in its measurement. In general terms, the underclass is made up of those who are consistently out of the labor force, dependent on welfare, in persisting (often transgenerational) poverty, and somewhat isolated from more mainstream activities. Less precise, more journalistic or pedestrian definitions of the term include a position outside of, or beneath, the regular class structure, a dimension of criminality and attitudinal and behavioral predispositions to not working.

However, despite its increasing use in policy circles, the term has a number of problems: it has been roundly criticized (Morris, in press; McGahey, 1982), and it is difficult to define (Ricketts and Sawhill, 1988) and therefore difficult to determine who is and who is not a member of the underclass. Its behavioral implications have not been substantiated; see Corcoran et al.(1985), who find that the majority of the persistently poor do not fit underclass stereotypes and that it is changes in economic

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[2] Indeed, there is some inferential evidence that this is the case. According to the 1980 census of Puerto Rico, it appears that those born in the states and living in Puerto Rico are making more money, are better educated, have less poverty, and have higher proportions of managerial, professional, and executive jobs, compared with those born in Puerto Rico. However, a slightly higher proportion of those born in the states are unemployed.

[1] Tienda and Jensen (1986:41) have said that "Puerto Ricans have become the Hispanic underclass during the past two decades and in many ways have become more similar to blacks over time." Rosenberg (1987:25) also finds that "Puerto Ricans appear to be at the bottom of the City's class structure."

circumstances that lead to changes in psychological attitudes and not vice versa. In addition, it is unclear what proportion of those in designated underclass areas have recently moved there and what proportion have been there for some time. Finally, the underclass concept has spawned "workfare" solutions (programs that require that welfare recipients work in exchange for the assistance received), but these have had mixed results in New York (New York Times, March 23, 1987:1).

If this new buzz word is so inaccurate, why is it still in use? It is used because it places the blame on individuals, thereby diverting attention from more structural problems. It resonates well with the articulation of a "new social contract" that emphasizes increasing self-reliance and reducing dependency. It also responds to the position raised by Charles Murray (1984) in Losing Ground, that government intervention has created an underclass. It reinforces concerns raised over "self-defeating patterns of behavior" and allows liberals, who are concerned with the social problems engendered by the shift, to develop policies that provide "opportunities for self-sufficiency."

The problem comes in the implementation. What is the impact of labeling individuals as members of the underclass? Will training accompany jobs? Will jobs have mobility? Should mothers be required-under threat of having their children's allowance taken away-to leave their small children so they can work at welfare wages? Where will these children be left? Will publicly funded, quality day care be provided? It appears that the underclass concept has provided another diversion from the real problems-how to employ all members of the society effectively and how to deal with the long-term joblessness that has become a chronic condition for increasing numbers of people in the economy.

Unmeasured Characteristics

Important methodological questions have been raised about how data in general are conceptualized, organized, and gathered. For example, some would argue that the "progress" of minorities is always measured relative to "the White man's" standards and that this reflects the assimilationism prevalent in research settings.

As Bonacich (1986: 12) says:

> The obsessive concern with mobility studies, with examining the distribution of minorities along a given and unquestioned social hierarchy, reflects an assimilationist bias.... Minorities will have "made it" when their distribution looks like the white distribution. No questions are raised about the structure of the dominant society that might be a little less than the ideal of human happiness. Obviously, it goes without saying, that all minorities want is to become like the "white man," fit neatly into his world and never raise another peep.

Although we may quibble with whether progress and success are measurable via socioeconomic indicators, the point implicit in Bonacich's statement is that there are other characteristics-such as dignity, pride, warmth, and generosity-that are part of the picture but are not measured. These characteristics are not any less in evidence in the Puerto Rican community than in communities with higher socioeconomic status-indeed, they may be more in evidence. Given the approach taken in many research studies, what should be obvious is in fact often ignored. This is that the dignity and value of the people represented in the data are often missed; the data are not the people.

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THE PUERTO RICAN FAMILY AND POVERTY: COMPLEX PATHS TO POOR OUTCOMES

Introduction

This report seeks to integrate findings from several studies on Puerto Rican women that utilized life-history surveys and were carried out by the authors and other colleagues. The basic premise underlying this research is that there exists a profound need for in-depth analysis of micro-level life-course processes if we are to formulate a clearer understanding of the forces generating and maintaining the high level of Puerto Rican Poverty. The current work focuses almost exclusively on women. This is a constraint brought about by unavoidable limits on the resources of the investigators. Acquiring data to explore promising avenues of research requires large expenditures of time and energy, in addition to money. Nevertheless, the prominence of female heads of households (and their children) among the population of poor Puerto Ricans suggests that much can be learned from this admittedly incomplete perspective.

The research reported here is based on the assumption that no single factor can be identified as the dominant cause of the social and economic problems faced by Puerto Ricans today. It may be most useful to view the causal dynamics generating current conditions as a complex web of interrelated forces. Some of these forces served as "triggers" of past trends (eg. the transformation of the labor force on the mainland and the course of economic change on the island), others developed, in part, as responses to initial problems and have acquired institutional inertia that is fed by diverse forces (eg. the current incarnation of the welfare system). It can be argued that major contributors to the initiation of trends may not provide useful tools to understanding how those trends are maintained. To the extent that such a claim is valid it will be necessary for investigators to integrate insights from micro-level analyses directly into their macro-level perspectives.

Of course, for the micro-level analyses to be useful to these broader perspectives, they must be informed by that body of work.

The first part of this report examines the link between migration selectivity and the growing concentration of poor Puerto Ricans (especially female heads of households) on the mainland. After describing this linkage using an empirical base of merged mainland and island databases, determinants of female headship and labor force participation among the mainland population are examined briefly in a more focused manner. The conclusion of this report returns to introductory themes and develops them a bit further. This report is not intended as a sweeping argument, but it is intended to encourage debate on the identification of profitable new directions in the efforts to expand our understanding of the aspects of society that need attention if the situation of Puerto Rican women is to improve.

Two life-history surveys of Puerto Rican women form the basis for the various strands of analysis that make up this report. One survey (the Puerto Rico Fertility and Family Planning Assessment -- or PRFFPA -- survey) sampled the population of women aged 15-49 and residing in Puerto Rico in 1982. The other survey (The New York Fertility, Employment and Migration -- or NYFEM -- survey) sampled the same age group for first and second generation Puerto Rican mainland residents of New York City and five surrounding counties in 1985. Both surveys contain detailed event histories and were supported by the Center for Population Research of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. The island survey was also supported by the Bureau of Community Health Services and the Centers for Disease Control. The migration selectivity analysis utilizes a data file that merges cases from these two similar and complementary surveys of Puerto Rican women.

Fieldwork for the NYFEM survey began in June of 1985 and continued until March of 1986. The long period of fieldwork yielded interviews with 87 percent of eligible women. Given the screening completion rate of 97.3 percent, the overall response rate is 85 percent. The fieldwork was conducted by the Institute of Survey Research of Temple University on a subcontract from Fordham University's Hispanic Research Center. The population

surveyed was women born in Puerto Rico or having at least one parent born in Puerto Rico, who were 15-49 years of age, and who resided in one of the five counties constituting New York City (New York, Kings, Queens, Bronx, and Richmond) or in one of five neighboring counties (Suffolk and Nassau in New York, and Essex, Passaic and Hudson in New Jersey). The final sample consists of 2,033 respondents.

These counties contain approximately 60 percent of Puerto Rican women residing on the mainland and aged 15-49. Ideally we would like to have a national mainland sample of Puerto Rican women with detailed life-history information, however such an effort would have been prohibitively expensive. The NYFEM sample does contain a majority of the mainland population and appears quite representative of the entire mainland population. This issue is addressed in greater detail in the concluding section of this paper.

The PRFFPA survey was conducted between September and December of 1982, and produced 3,175 completed interviews. Its survey population is women aged 15-49 and residing anywhere in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. A multistage cluster sample similar in design to that employed for the NYFEM was employed. The content of the survey is similar to that of the NYFEM survey. The screening completion rate for the PRFFPA was 96.9 percent while the completion rate for the individual interviews was 90.8 percent for an overall completion rate of 88 percent.

Migration Selectivity: The Role of Family and SES

Recent studies have underlined the problematic situation in which Puerto Rican women on the U.S. mainland find themselves. The central dimensions of this reality consists of very low levels of labor force participation, high rates of marital disruption and a very high incidence of female headed households (Tienda and Jensen, 1986; Bean and Tienda, 1987; Gurak and Falcón, 1989; Powers and Macisco, 1982). The conjunction of these factors indicates that what is termed the feminization of poverty applies very much to Puerto Rican women. In 1985, 44 percent of Puerto Rican families in the mainland United States were female headed (Table 1). Only

Blacks had a higher incidence. Even more important than the high rate of female headship for Puerto Rican families is the rapid rate of growth of this category. For Puerto Ricans the 1985 figure is close to 300% of the 1960 incidence of 15.8 percent. This rapid rate of increase exceeds that of all other groups by a considerable margin (Tienda and Jensen, 1986).

Puerto Ricans are internal U.S. migrants whose migration to the U.S. mainland exhibits numerous similarities to that of international migrants. They face the linguistic and cultural barriers that international migrants face, and it is necessary to consider the nature of their migration experience in order to arrive at a solid understanding of their position in the mainland United States. When viewed as a long-term process the insertion of a migrant population into a host society has multiple stages or dimensions. These include the characteristics of the sending society's culture, the selectivity of the migrant population, the immediate activities and disruptions associated with the physical move, and the interactions between the migrants and the host society's institutions (Carlson, 1985; Lee, et. al. 1986; Goldstein and Goldstein, 1982). Most analyses of migrant integration processes fail to concentrate on the role of selectivity processes. Yancey, et. al. (1976) argue forcefully that ethnicity should not be viewed as a qualitative attribute, but rather as a continuous construct the value of which is shaped by the dynamic structural conditions faced by different segments of demographic aggregates. This argument can be extended to encourage examinations of mechanisms that influence the characteristics of a migrant population prior to interactions with new host society.

The culture of the migrants' origin population is surely as diverse and dynamic as that at the intersection of immigrant groups and the host society; consequently, our knowledge of the trajectory of an immigrant group's integration experience in a host society should be greatly augmented by focusing on the selectivity mechanisms that encourage some individuals or population segments to migrate more than others. While some researchers implicitly recognize the importance of migration selectivity (Portes and Bach, 1985; Piore, 1979), few research efforts have explicitly attempted

to specify actual selectivity mechanisms and magnitude. Given the distinct socio-demographic profile of Puerto Rican women in the mainland, it is important to specify the extent to which that profile is produced by the "importation" of characteristics. A distinct immigrant profile may be produced simply by the process of migrants originating in a society characterized by different institutional patterns -- such as a higher incidence of consensual unions (Henriques, 1982; De Vos, 1987). However, when the migrants represent a distinct strata of the origin society and when that distinctiveness contributes to their special situation in the host society, then our attention should be focused on the previously unstudied complex social processes which are producing a new ethnic group in the host society -- including not only structural conditions in the host society, but also the complex linkages between the origin and host societies.

Selectivity in Migration to the Mainland

The extent to which selectivity in the migration to the mainland may be contributing to the high degree of marital instability and the low level of labor force participation observed among Puerto Rican women on the mainland is analyzed utilizing proportional hazards models.[1] Time-varying covariates are used to estimate the effects of marital, fertility, and socioeconomic factors on the probability and timing of migration to the mainland. The results clearly indicate that Puerto Rican females who migrate to the mainland differ systematically from those who remain on the

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[1] The merged file utilized in the analysis of migration to the mainland consists of all women who were born in Puerto Rico and residing there at the age of 15. This age restriction reflects both a reasonable starting point in a search for the determinants of first migration of mature women to the mainland, and the fact that the Island survey's event histories start at this point (the New York survey's migration history begins at age 10). The final sample consists 3,309 women, of which 1,104 migrated to the mainland at least once after attaining 15 years of age. Of the migrants, 662 were interviewed by the New York survey and 442 by the Island survey. This latter group of migrants were, in 1982, return migrants to the island who were still in Puerto Rico at age 15.

island.[1]

The migrants to the mainland come from lower SES and higher fertility backgrounds. They have less labor force experience on the island, and were less likely to be employed prior to migration -- including during the period immediately preceding the migration. Of equal or greater significance, the migrants to the mainland experience marital and fertility sequences prior to the migration that distinguish them from those who do not migrate. They were more likely to have had a birth within the year prior to migration/censoring; and they experienced more marital disruption prior to migration (overall and during the two years prior to migration/censoring). These results are summarized in Tables 2 and 3.

The pattern of selectivity of migration to the mainland can be interpreted as a process which is increasing the concentration of Puerto Rican women on the mainland who will be female heads of households and/or out of the labor force. No argument is being made that migration selectivity is the most important contributor to the high incidence of these outcomes among Puerto Rican women on the mainland. Rather, the evidence of the distinctive selectivity pattern suggests that structural conditions on both the mainland and the island are interacting in a manner that is amplifying the size of the dependent Puerto Rican female population in the New York region. It is assumed that those structural conditions have major impacts on the life cycles of women distinct from those that are articulated through the migration process.

Return Migration Selectivity

Whereas non-migrants in Puerto Rico and migrants to the mainland differed markedly across a range of family formation and socioeconomic indicators (see Tables 2 and 3), differences between return migrants and those remaining on the mainland exist, but are

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[1] Tables 2 and 3 provide descriptive statistics for the principal variables used in the analysis of migration to the mainland (Table 2) and of migration to the Island (Table 3). Table 4 summarizes the results of the event history analyses for both migrations. More detail can be found in earlier reports (Gurak, et al., 1987; 1988).

more complex in nature.[1] The descriptive statistics in Tables 2 and 3 must be interpreted cautiously since they do not reflect differences in the exposure to the "risk" of return migration. Return migrants were slightly more likely to come from non-metropolitan areas and larger families of origin. Though the difference is less marked, this parallels the findings for migrants to the mainland and suggests that high fertility backgrounds and more rural origins increase the propensity to migrate in response to social conditions.

The life-cycle and calendar timing of migration to the mainland conforms to expectations. Return migrants arrived on the mainland at an older average age than did mainland stayers (27.6% and 46.5%, respectively, arrived prior to the age of 15). In terms of calendar time, return migrants were less likely to be recent migrants to the mainland. For both groups, the modal period of arrival was during the 1960s, however return migrants are over represented among pre-1960 arrivals, and under represented among post-1970 arrivals. Since both groups had average ages in the mid 30s when surveyed, the age and period differences at arrival on the mainland represent distinct migration histories of women born at approximately the same point in historical time.

The differences in marital status at the time of return or censoring between the return migrants and the mainland stayers conform to the image of the New York region as an attractor and retainer of those who have experienced marital disruptions. Mainland-stayers were considerably more likely to be divorced or separated (39.6%) than were return migrants (13.7%). Return migrants were more likely to be in legal unions and never married. The modal category for return migrants was to be in a legal union (46.6%), while that for mainland-stayers was to be divorced or

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[1] The analysis of return migration uses a second merged file drawn from the same two data sets that were used to produce the merged file for the analysis of migration to the mainland. This analysis focuses on all Puerto Rican-born women from both samples who ever resided on the mainland. 1,876 cases constitute this merged file. Of this total, 787 moved from the mainland to the island at least once subsequent to attaining 15 years of age. 596 of these return migrants were interviewed in Puerto Rico (PRFFPA), and 191 were interviewed in New York (NYFEM).

separated. Mainland-stayers were considerably more likely to be in informal unions (18.6%) than were return migrants (8.4%). While these differences certainly reflect life-cycle stage to some extent (return migrants were 24.3 years old at the time of their return migration while mainland-stayers were 33.4), they do suggest that marital history is intimately associated with the migration process.

Given the age difference between return migrants and mainland-stayers at the point of return/censor, the fertility data presents no surprises. The younger return migrants had fewer births, but were more likely to have had recent births than the mainland stayers. How these factors relate to the timing of the return migration requires the incorporation of exposure to risk into the model. Before proceeding with that part of the analysis we describe the socioeconomic differences of the two categories.

While migrants to the mainland had fewer years of formal education and less labor force experience than did island-stayers (Tables 2 and 3), return migrants were somewhat better educated and more likely to be in the labor force at the time of migration/censoring than were mainland-stayers. These differences are not large, but they do conform with the image of the migration process between Puerto Rico and the New York region as one that selectively attracts and retains women from poorer socioeconomic backgrounds.

While the descriptive profiles do suggest the existence of a two-stage process of migration selectivity, only by taking into consideration exposure to the risk of migration can we determine with some confidence whether such a process is in fact operating. Proportional hazards event history models are utilized to fulfill this need (Menken, et al., 1981; Allison, 1984). Exposure to risk is measured by the elapsed time, in months, from arrival on the mainland to return to Puerto Rico (or the survey for those who had not yet returned by that time). For return migrants, the duration of the mainland stay ranged from less than one to over 20 years. The range for mainland-stayers was almost identical though the average duration was considerably longer (220 versus 88 months).

Table 4 summarizes the results of the event history analysis

for the two migration flows. What stands out is the approximation of what might be termed "mirror image" results. Factors that are important in the migration to the mainland are either not significant for the return migration or have the opposite effect. Most important in this regard are educational attainment, marital stability and the presence of young children. While those with more education, employment experience, lower fertility, and more stable marital unions were less likely to migrate to the mainland, mainland residents with those characteristics (except for employment) were more likely to leave the mainland to return to Puerto Rico.

Discussion of the Implications of Migration Selectivity Findings

As Yancey, et. al. (1976) have illustrated, ethnicity is an emergent phenomenon that continues to develop with the changing positions of groups and individuals within society. The results of this analysis of migratory selectivity among Puerto Rican women extends this line of reasoning to include links to the origin society and structural conditions in that society. It is now clear that selectivity mechanisms do operate. These mechanisms serve to increase the relative size of the mainland component of the Puerto Rican population that is likely to have low labor force participation and to be at risk of being female heads of households by virtue of their high rates of marital disruption. In sum, to some extent that which is problematic in the situation of Puerto Rican women on the mainland is due to the selectivity of who migrates to the mainland and of who then remains in the New York region.

The existence of a clear pattern of selectivity into low labor force participation and high marital disruption statuses does not mean that economic and social conditions in mainland society are not important. Economic and social conditions must play a powerful role in conditioning the emerging condition of Puerto Rican women. Further, while the selectivity pattern is quite clear, only a minority of Puerto Rican women migrate to the mainland following a marital disruption, and the selectivity dynamics of return migration do not appear as powerful as those influencing migration

to the mainland. Consequently, it is important to avoid characterizing all migrants in terms of the traits of the minority, though it is a disproportionate minority, who have what might be considered problematic characteristics.

The existence of the type of selectivity observed in this analysis points to the unique interrelationship of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the rest of the United States. Unlike the situation that appears to exist among many international migrant groups, the Puerto Rican migrants to the mainland are less economically active than those that stay behind. Dominican, Cuban, Colombian and other migrants (Ugalde, et. al., 1979; Gurak and Kritz, 1982, 1987, 1988; Portes and Bach, 1985), on the other hand, appear to be more economically active than those left behind. The Puerto Rican migrants appear to choose to migrate to solve familial problems more than economic ones. Alternatively, some of the migrants may be opting for higher welfare benefits on the mainland. More work is needed to determine just what life course the migrants experience after arriving in the mainland United States. The need for this work is emphasized by the nature of return selectivity, which reenforces the tendencies generated in the migration from the island to the mainland. It appears that the Puerto Rican migration of women is influenced by the existence of both informal and formal support systems in the New York region that attract and retain those most in need of such support.

The merged files utilized in this analysis approximate a closed migration system, but the fit is far from perfect. Many Puerto Ricans who leave the island do not settle in the New York region-a trend that continues to accelerate (Ortiz, 1986). Others who have settled there have subsequently migrated to some other mainland destination. According to the 1980 census, as many as 40 percent of women aged 15-49 and residing on the mainland were not included in the Island-New York Metropolitan sample population. This introduces a potential bias into the analysis. In so far as a bias exists, it can be handled definitionally: the analysis has focused on migration selectivity between the principal destinations of Puerto Ricans, and makes no claim to describe migration selectivity of Puerto Ricans within the entire U.S. Despite the importance of

articulating migration processes for this population, a gap remains in our understanding of Puerto Rican migration.

In fact, there is strong reason to believe that the type of selectivity described in this analysis is less typical of migrants who leave the island and settle elsewhere in the United States. Table 10 provides some support for this observation. Among Puerto Rican women, rates of marital disruption and female headship (estimated here with % of children under 18 not residing with two parents) are significantly higher in the New York region than they are elsewhere in the mainland United States. Similarly, though to a lesser degree, labor force participation is lower in the New York region. This "New York" pattern also occurs for other Hispanic groups (Gurak and Falcón, 1989) and is itself a poorly understood product of selective migration both in and out of the region as well as whatever corrosive effect the region's social and economic structures have managed to generate.

While the selectivity of migration to the mainland may be predominantly a selectivity in the migration of those who choose the New York region, the merged file included among the return migrants some who had migrated elsewhere.[1] In addition, the mainland regional differentials appear less pronounced than the migratory selectivity results could create on their own. Further, for some variables such as children ever born there are no regional differences. Migrants from Puerto Rico are of above average fertility backgrounds and were disproportionately likely to have had a live birth or been pregnant just before the migration to the mainland. Consequently, it is necessary to assume either that there is some evenness in the distribution of migrants throughout the mainland, or that the fertility reducing effects of settlement on the mainland (if they exist) function differently in various mainland regions.

The bottom line of this analysis is simply that migrants from Puerto Rico to the mainland are not representative of the island

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[1] Though the number of cases is limited, and return migrants from outside the New York region interviewed in Puerto Rico can not be compared with those who remained in those non-New York mainland areas, this category of return migrant will be examined in greater detail.

population, and return migrants are not representative of the New York region's Puerto Rican population. The existence of selective migration is to be expected. What is unusual about the current instance is the tendency for the sending area to be exporting individuals of below average socioeconomic status and above average family instability. The fact that the receiving area tends to disproportionately retain members of these same categories strongly indicates that the structured linkages of the island and mainland institutions play a major role in the formation of Puerto Rican characteristics in the New York region.

Female Headed Households: Causes and Consequences

Trends in marital and family arrangements have been an issue of pressing concern during the last decade. Continued increases in rates of divorce, cohabitation, female headship, and early childbearing have altered the traditional couple oriented family organization and raised new questions regarding the impact of these changes on the economic stability of the family and on the socialization of children (for a review of trends see: Thornton and Freedman 1983; Cherlin 1981; Glick and Norton 1977; Hofferth and Moore 1979; Rindfuss, Bumpass and St. John 1980; Rindfuss, Morgan, and Swicegood 1984; Davis, 1986).

Families headed by women are of particular concern because they tend to be poor and to have inadequate social support systems (Tienda and Glass 1985). The social and economic problems faced by these families have serious consequences for their children. Evidence indicates, for example, that children who are raised in mother-only families tend to be less successful, on the average, when they become adults than children from two parent families (Garfinkel and McLanahan 1986). There is also evidence that married persons are more likely to separate and/or divorce if they come from disrupted families--raising the possibility that a system of family disruption may reproduce itself (Mueller and Pope 1977; McLanahan and Bumpass 1988; McLanahan 1988).

Some empirical evidence indicates that these trends and their consequences are more accentuated among minority populations (Thornton and Freedman 1983; Michael and Tuma 1985). Not only are

Blacks and some Hispanic groups more likely than whites to experience marital dissolution, but they also experience a higher proportion of female-headed families living in poverty and stronger effects of family disruption on the subsequent marital stability of their children (Hogan and Kitagawa 1985; McLanahan 1985; 1988; Michael and Tuma 1985).

During the last three decades Puerto Ricans have experienced a dramatic increase in the proportion of families headed by women, along with increases in marital disruption (Bean and Tienda 1988; Gurak and Falcón 1989; Tienda and Jensen 1986). The proportion of female-headed Puerto Rican households almost doubled between 1970 and 1986. Currently, it is more than twice as large as the proportion among Non-Puerto Rican Hispanic families (43.3% to 20.3%), and almost three times as great as the proportion among all non-hispanic whites (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1987). This analysis focuses on identifying the direction and magnitude of the influence of background, couple, and individual characteristics on the probability that Puerto Rican women in the New York metropolitan area would be female heads of household in the mid-1980s.

Trends in marital stability and female headship are of special importance for the Puerto Rican population because of their close association with socioeconomic conditions. Analyses of trends between decennial censuses suggest an increasingly disadvantaged situation and the potential for developing into an underclass (Tienda and Jensen 1986). During the last two decades, levels of labor force participation have remained below those of other Hispanic groups while rates of unemployment and poverty in general have surged upward rapidly (Falcón Rodríguez 1987). In the United States, 66.5% of all Puerto Rican female-headed families were below the poverty line in 1986. In other words, the increased marital instability experienced by Puerto Ricans and the subsequent increase in the number of female-headed families is taking place in a context of socioeconomic decline for this population--but especially for Puerto Rican women and children.

The social forces contributing to the increasing incidence of female-headed Puerto Rican families are clearly complex. Three discrete processes--marital disruption, remarriage or its absence,

and nonmarital fertility--can contribute to the emergence and maintenance of this status. General societal trends towards higher divorce rates and nonmarital fertility quite likely contribute to the Puerto Rican pattern, but it is reasonable to assume that the dramatic increase of female headship during the last three decades and its current high prevalence result, in part, from forces that are more peculiar to the Puerto Rican minority. These forces may be related to the dynamics, described earlier, that shape the migration system linking Puerto Rico and the New York region[1] (Rindfuss 1976; Ortiz 1986; Gurak, Falcón, and Powers 1987; 1988). They may also be related to cultural patterns that differentiate aspects of the Puerto Rican marriage institution from that which characterizes the dominant mainland population. For example, the dynamics underlying the higher incidence of informal marital unions found in Caribbean Hispanic societies may differentially influence the marital disruption process of Puerto Ricans on the mainland (De Vos 1987; Durch 1980; Henriques 1979; Richter 1987). Even here, one must avoid making too much of differences (Wall 1983): nonmarital cohabitation has become an increasingly common component of the family formation process in the mainland United States (Glick and Spanier 1980; Tanfer 1987; Bachrach 1987). It is clear, however, that some significant ethnic differences in the behavior and support systems of female heads in the United States do exist (See Tienda and Glass 1985 on the relationship of female headship and labor force participation).

Several characteristics of women may play a role in producing one of the forms of the joint occurrence of marital disruption, lack of remarriage, and fertility that characterize one as a female head (no spouse present and at least one child under the age of 18 living with her). First, various dimensions of the social environment experienced while growing up could increase the odds of

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[1] According to the 1980 census, approximately 60 percent of Puerto Rican women aged 15-49--the population covered by the survey utilized in the empirical portion of this study--reside in the New York metropolitan region. Thus, while not strictly representative of the entire mainland Puerto Rican population, the survey population does provide a reasonable approximation of the experiences of that broader theoretical population.

this event. These include socialization that reduces commitment to stable marriages as well as deficits in socioeconomic resources that reduce the chances of acquiring education and other resources that are associated with stable unions (Mueller and Pope 1977; McLanahan 1988). Other background factors such as parental fertility and religion may also influence behavior in ways conducive to a transition to female headship (e.g. early first birth, early marriage). Regardless of background, in the life course women acquire varying amounts of education, labor force experience, training, and other human capital. Such factors influence the selectivity of the marriage market segment in which a women becomes located, her fertility behavior (Furstenberg 1976; Hofferth and Moore 1979; Rindfuss et al., 1980; Rindfuss et al., 1984), and her ability to function autonomously economically and to contribute economically to a household. Because they are more proximate to current status, it should be expected that they will prove to influence the odds of becoming a female head more strongly than background factors. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to expect that both background and acquired individual characteristics will influence family formation behavior independently to a degree.

In addition to individual and background factors, it is necessary to consider characteristics of the partners women have had in their formal or informal unions.[1] While the characteristics of partners will be influenced by both background and individual characteristics, the choice of spouses is not highly predictable using such information. Furthermore, the behavior of partners during unions can clearly change the trajectory from that which it appeared to be on at the time of the union. It is important to consider the socioeconomic characteristics of spouses during

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[1] Throughout this analysis we use the general term "union" instead of marriage. This category includes both legal marriages and informal or cohabitative unions. The prevalence of informal unions and the strong tendency for births to occur in such unions as well as prior to any type of union renders it important not to truncate the sample. Type of union is treated as a variable. In the survey, women were asked information on all unions they had ever been in, including legal, informal, and cohabitation. The category non-legal includes those unions which respondents characterized as informal marriages and those not so characterized but involving co-residence.

specific unions since this provides a means for assessing the extent to which broader socioeconomic problems (low rates of labor force participation, high unemployment, low educational attainment) contribute to the union disruptions that form a major path to the status of female head.

While these three categories of micro-level factors--family background, women's characteristics, and spouse/partner's characteristics--can explain only part of the process that lead an increasing number of Puerto Rican women to become female heads, the information provided by such an analysis forms an integral component of any broader model. If general labor market conditions play a significant role, then evidence of this should be detectable from the data on both spouse and individual characteristics. If socialization and resources acquired early in life are important, then evidence of this should persist, to a degree, once more proximate factors are considered. The general literature on the determinants of marital disruption and female headship has utilized versions of this framework, and a brief look at the state of knowledge is warranted.

Existing evidence on the intergenerational transmission of a tendency toward marital disruption and female headship suggests that some transmission does indeed occur. Mueller and Pope (1977) found evidence of an intergenerational transmission of a tendency towards marital instability. McLanahan and Bumpass (1988), using data from the National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle III, have recently found that daughters who live in single-parent families between the ages of 12 and 16 are more likely to establish female-headed families themselves when adults. McLanahan (1988), using the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (as of its 1982 panel) found that there is a strong association between having lived in a female-headed household during the early teen years and being on welfare and being a female head by the time a women is in her early 20s. Similarly, daughters from broken-homes are more likely to marry early and to bear children early (McLanahan 1988; McLanahan and Bumpass 1988; Hogan and Kitagawa, 1985). Some of these studies have been able to explore the nature of the underlying mechanisms--focusing on economic deprivation, socialization, and stress

associated with the parental marital disruption (McLanahan 1988; McLanahan and Bumpass 1988). The evidence here is somewhat inconsistent. Economic deprivation is found to play some role, but McLanahan and Bumpass (1988) find that socialization is the main mechanism. McLanahan (1988) finds more evidence for the stress hypothesis and very little for the socialization hypothesis. Differences in data sources (retrospective and prospective longitudinal designs) and in operationalization of concepts probably contribute to the different conclusions.

The evidence for the effects of couple characteristics on the possibility of marital dissolution is more inconclusive. Some have suggested that women's employment can be a source of stress to a husband (Kessler and McRae 1982). Other studies have suggested that increased women's employment and, accordingly, increased economic self-reliance leads to higher rates of marital dissolution (Ross and Sawhill 1975). On the husband's characteristics, earlier work by Bumpass and Sweet (1972) presented evidence of a negative relationship between partner's education and marital instability. A long standing hypothesis has also been that male employment patterns--particularly unemployment--are related to marital stability (for a review see Garfinkel and McLanahan 1986). Wilson (1988) has recently argued that male instability in the labor market is "the driving force behind the rise of female-headed families" among blacks. Notwithstanding, very little attention has been given to the role of partner characteristics in influencing the processes by which women become female heads.

Correlates of Female Headship Among Puerto Rican Women

A woman enters the status of female-head of household either by having a marital union dissolve with children present or by having children out of a union. Puerto Rican women experience a wide range of family structures and transitions as evidenced by the data presented in table 5. Close to half of all women surveyed (46.8%) had a last/current union which was legal and one third (33.8%) had been or were in a non-legalized union. On the other hand, close to 20% of the women had never been in any type of marital union. At the time of the survey 43.4% of the women were

in some type of union, 14% were single with no children under age 18, 6.6% had ended some type of union but had no children under age 18, and 33.7% had ended an union and had children under age 18 present. In addition, 5.3% of all women had never been in a union but had children under age 18. Women in the latter two categories--those whose union ended with children present or those who had children without ever being in a union--are considered to be female-heads of household. About 36% of all the women in the survey could be classified as being in female-head of household status. Of those, 44% came into the status from a legal union, 42% from a non-legal union, and 15% had never been in any type of union. It is important to note that more than half of all the FHH came into the status from a marital status other than a legal marriage. This clearly suggests the need to consider all types of marital arrangements when examining the question of female-headship among Puerto Ricans. For the remainder of this analysis only women who have children under age 18 and have ever been in a union are included because of the analytic focus on the effects of union-specific characteristics. The population being excluded (35.7% of the sample) includes about 15% of all female heads--women who have never been in a union.

Women who are heads of household differ significantly from those whose spouses are present in terms of background, spouse, and own characteristics. If having an employed father and mother is an indicator of an economically stable family background, female-heads are clearly disadvantaged when compared to non female-heads (Table 6). Female-heads are less likely to have had a working mother or father while they were growing-up. The findings are similar for the characteristics of the current/previous partner. Female-heads are less likely to have had a partner with a high-school education. In addition, the average occupational status score for partners of female-heads was about six points lower than that of non female-heads. With respect to their own characteristics female-heads were less likely than women with a spouse present to have been in a legal union, they had less education at the time of union, were less likely to have worked during the union and to have received any type of training during the union. Female-heads are also more

likely to indicate Catholic as their religious affiliation.

Clearly, female-heads of household have a more disadvantaged socioeconomic profile. As expected, background and union-specific characteristics are more positive for women who were still in a union at the time of the survey. In order to further assess the differential impact of these factors on the likelihood of being a female-head, a multivariate model--in this instance logit regression, was used.

Table 7 summarizes a series of logit regressions that investigated the step-wise contributions of background, partner and woman-union characteristics to the probability of being a female head at the time of the survey. Three subsets of the population are examined: 1) all women ever in a union and with children under age 18. 2) women whose current/last union was their first regardless of type of union; and 3) women whose current/last union was their first and was a legal marriage.

Background and "woman-union" characteristics are consistently more strongly associated with female headship than are spouse characteristics. It should be noted that this does not mean that what happens to males in unimportant, rather it suggests that partner characteristics are predictable from knowledge of the other partner's background and current position in society.

Three types of findings stand out for all three subsets. First training and employment during the prior/current union strongly differentiates those who are currently female heads from those who are not. This suggests that becoming a female head has roots in the forces that constrain female labor force participation during marital unions. Households in which the wife is employed are considerably better off economically and this factor apparently serves to reduce the probability of marital disruption. Second, women who specified that their fathers were employed when they were growing up are considerably less likely to be female heads. Due to a quirk in the measurement of this variable, it is not clear whether the relationship is due to actual employment status of the father or to parental marital status. A significant minority indicated that they did not know whether their father was employed at that time. Although we can not be certain, it is very likely

that the father was not living at home in these cases. Third, Protestants are more much less likely than Catholics to be female heads. This relationship is very strong and is not affected by controlling for other social and economic factors. Since many Protestants have converted to their current religion, this finding suggests a process of self-selection into communal religious groups in an effort to insulate one's self from forces weakening the family. While much more work is needed to clarify the actual nature of this relationship, the finding of a religious impact operating independently of education, employment and other background conditions does suggest that individuals can overcome dominant contextual constraints on behavior.[1]

Discussion of Correlates of Female Headship

Contemporary studies stress the complexity of the process by which a woman becomes a female-head of household. The research presented here has added to earlier work which underscored the centrality of parental background in this process, by paying needed attention to the characteristics of the partner and of the woman during the union. It provides a reasonable picture of central dimensions of the process. We find strong evidence of an intergenerational effect of parental background on the likelihood of becoming a female-head. Women who indicated that their father worked while they were growing up appear to be less likely to be in the status of female-head at the time of the survey. The effect becomes stronger if only first unions are considered. The reason for this effect remains an open question, though it appears related to the chronic absence of the father. McLanahan (1988) recently summarized three potential explanations which include the economic deprivation hypothesis, the absent role model hypothesis, and the

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[1] It should be emphasized that the description of the importance of religion in this cases is not meant as an argument in favor of conversion. Such behavior is well outside of the realm of social engineering and the associated constraints of participation in a particular religion may be viewed by many as more onerous than the possible economic consequences of alternative behaviors. We suggest that the impact of religion underlines the truism that individuals and communal groups interact with the structural context and have the ability to mediate structural constraints in diverse ways.

family-stress hypothesis. The data does not allow us to go further into that particular question, but it is one worth considering for future research.

Within this population, religious affiliation influences the probability of becoming a female-head. This effect is strong and robust. It appears unrelated to the other demographic and socioeconomic factors considered. How this religious effect operates is unclear. The little work that has been done on religious differences within the Puerto Rican population on the mainland is outdated. Notwithstanding, we speculate that the differential effect of being Catholic is rooted in the disparate organizations of the Catholic Church and the more fundamentalist pentecostal religion which is rapidly spreading among Puerto Ricans. Storefront churches have sprouted throughout the hispanic "barrios". The religious sects tend to be more communal, less hierarchical, more geographically restricted and, as a result, more intimate. Behavioral restrictions tend to be more explicit and stern, and deviations morally judged not only by the religious leadership, but by the church community as a whole. This distinctive socialization, we speculate, could be behind the lower probability of becoming a female-head for women who are not Catholic. In addition, a selectivity-conversion process may be influencing the observed results.

Clearly, women who were employed or who had received specialized training during the marital union were less likely to be female-heads at the time of the survey. Recent work has emphasized the positive association between training and labor force participation for this population of women (Falcón, Gurak and Powers 1987). The negative effects associated with partner's education and partner's occupational status may well indicate the lower rate of success for less educated Puerto Ricans and its subsequent impact on marital stability. Furthermore, it may explain the coincidence of increased female-headship and increased economic instability of Puerto Rican males (Tienda and Jensen 1986). This finding is important to the extent that it contributes to bridging the gap in the literature on the connection between experiences in the labor market and changes in marital arrangements. The observed

increase in female-headship and the instability within the labor market have not been two independent processes, but one where the status of female-head seems to be associated with less than optimal characteristics among the partners in the last union.

As this work is continued more attention will be given to a series of factors: First, the migratory character of this population needs to be considered. Previous work has found that experiencing a marital dissolution was significantly associated with increased risk of migrating from Puerto Rico to the mainland (Gurak et al, 1987; 1988). Thus, migration has become, in part, another strategy to manage the aftermath of a marital dissolution. In this context, then, migration becomes another factor among many contributing to the demographic changes observed among Puerto Rican families on the mainland. Models which incorporate migration or recency of the migration and which allow for the timing of the marital dissolution need to be incorporated.

Second, a marital dissolution is not a transition every woman undergoes, but for Puerto Rican women it is an increasingly common occurrence. In addition, many of these women go through this transition more than once. Findings presented here indicate that becoming a female-head is associated not only with background characteristics, but with "marketability": higher education, training, and employment. How the timing and sequencing of these events relate to the outcome of interest--female-headship--needs to be addressed in more detail. The previous point similarly applies to the timing of marital births during the union.

To conclude, the evidence, albeit preliminary, indicates the existence of an intergenerational effect on the likelihood of entering the status of female-head of household. Given recent research, this finding was expected. In addition, it was found that couples who exhibit more positive educational and employment characteristics are less likely to experience a marital dissolution. This finding firmly links the mechanisms generating a high rate of female heads of household to those contributing to the education and labor force problems of Puerto Ricans men and women. The apparent insulating effect of being non-catholic requires considerable further thought. The most outstanding aspect of this

finding is its independence from other factors. Clearly cultural processes that go beyond the institutions of education and employment are at work.

The Labor Force Participation of Puerto Rican Women

Since 1960 there have been dramatic changes in the labor force patterns of women in the U.S. Numerous analysts have noted the rapid increase in the number of women in the labor force and employed, as well as their longer working careers (Rodgers 1986; Cherlin 1981; Davis 1986; Tanfer 1987; McLanahan 1988). These increases have not been experienced equally by all subgroups of the population, however, as ethnicity and race continue to influence the labor force experiences of men and women. Minority women, in general, and Puerto Rican women, in particular, exhibit patterns of labor force behavior different in many respects from those of all other women, with the levels of Puerto Rican women being much lower than those of all other groups (Bean and Tienda 1988; Falcón-Rodríguez 1987; Higginbotham 1987).

Women's labor force activity is determined by processes more complex than those suggested by a focus on individual-level variables and household or family composition variables. Structural or contextual variables, such as those that characterize the operation of local labor markets and their change over time, are clearly important.[1] Between 1960 and 1980, most social and

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labor force (Bean and Tienda 1988; Bonilla and Campos 1986; Rodriguez 1980; Santana-Cooney and Colon-Warren 1979). For example, in 1972, of all employment in the city of New York, 18.8% was in manufacturing. By 1982, the figure had declined to 14.7% and by 1987 it was only 10.7% (Meislin 1987). The coincidence of fast paced transformations in the economy with an already precarious socioeconomic position contributed to worsening the overall standing of the Puerto Rican population. Other contextual mechanisms may also be at work. These include the interaction of labor force trends and the social support system, competition with other immigrant groups, and institutional forces affecting the selectivity of migrants to the New York City area (Falcón and Hirschman 1988; Gurak, Falcón, and Powers 1987; 1988).

competition with other immigrant groups, and institutional forces affecting the selectivity of migrants to the New York City area (Falcón and Hirschman 1988; Gurak, Falcón, and Powers 1987; 1988). No single study can simultaneously address all of these dimensions. By concentrating on the relationship between labor force behavior and individual and household factors, our knowledge base can be expanded in a manner that permits more informed conceptualization of possible structural mechanisms. Given the dramatic changes in female labor force participation, marital stability, and household composition over the last two decades, knowledge about these basic relationships is uneven. What we know suggests that variable patterns characterize different population segments (Tienda and Glass, 1985; Bean and Tienda, 1988). Consequently, there exists a need to build a firmer foundation before attempting to assess the multilevel operation of structural, household, and individual processes.[1]

It can be argued that rapid economic transformations--and the subsequent economic insecurity they create--may have resulted in increased marital instability and change in household arrangements. In this case, the individual and household characteristics may serve as mechanisms for articulating the impact of the broader economic context on labor force patterns. Clearly factors other than the economic transformations have also produced changes in marital and household patterns. In either case, some particular individual household patterns may be more conducive than other to low socioeconomic status and to the intergenerational transmission of socioeconomic status. While the complex linkages between contextual factors and individual and household characteristics are not directly considered in this overview, it is clear that any

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[1] To a significant degree, the labor market context is held constant by focusing on the New York metropolitan area--the principal mainland residence area of Puerto Rican women. Nevertheless, it should be understood that subarea differences do exist, and the residential mobility of this population suggests that the structural context of any particular respondent at a particular point in the life cycle may have been that of a place other than New York. To the extent possible, the significance of the results of this analysis for a broader contextual understanding of the forces shaping Puerto Rican labor force activity is addressed in the conclusion.

understanding of the determinants of Puerto Rican women's labor force patterns requires an understanding of how such individual and household factors influence labor force participation and employment.

The literature on female labor force participation documents the complexities of women's career trajectories through the labor market (Oppenheimer 1982; Waite 1980). Labor market experiences of women are more complicated than those of men due to job interruptions, delayed entries and/or early abandonment of the labor market. These factors are connected to other life cycle processes such as changes in marital status and motherhood. Women's labor force participation rates are more sensitive than men's to household composition effects. Within multivariate models, human capital variables such as age and education tend to operate in a similar direction for men and women.[1] Due to increased educational opportunities for Puerto Ricans during the last few decades--both on the mainland United States and in Puerto Rico--age is highly correlated with education. In addition, for this particular population, education is also correlated with nativity (mainland birth). Mainland birth and higher levels of education are, in turn, associated with a higher propensity to utilize the English language in most daily activities.

In addition to individual-level characteristics, household composition is important because households are the structures within which women organize their time use, both in and out of the labor force. Numerous historical studies suggest that both financial well-being and women's labor force activity are dependent upon family composition (Bose 1984; Tilly and Scott 1978). Moreover, contemporary evidence also suggests that families are the essential income producing group (Oppenheimer 1982; Waite 1980). The increased participation of women in the labor force in recent years has been central to maintaining or improving family socioeconomic status. Among minorities, in particular, the two-

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[1] In general, this is true for labor force participation. The picture becomes more complex when analyzing occupational distributions and status attainment (Powers and Holmberg, 1978).

earner family has been, in many respects, a precondition for significant improvement of status (Gilbert and Kahl 1987).

While a woman's ability to seek and obtain employment is typically influenced by characteristics such as education, other factors including the presence of a spouse, his income level, and the presence of pre-school children (household composition) mediate the effects of human capital variables. The presence of young children, in particular, has conflicting effects on the participation of women in the labor force (Powers and Salvo 1982). On the one hand, the presence of young children requires additional time investment by parents (typically the mother) which is usually taken away from other activities such as participation in the labor force. On the other hand, the presence of additional children creates increased economic need and, accordingly, the need for additional income to sustain the family. This interplay between family responsibilities and economic need complicates the processes influencing the participation of women in the labor market.

Whether or not a spouse is present in the household influences the probability of a women's being in the labor force. Previous studies have found the marital status and household composition of Hispanic women to relate strongly to their labor force participation. Among all women, and most Hispanic women, married women (spouse present) are less likely to participate in the labor force than single women, other things being equal. Some research suggests that Black and Puerto Rican women are an exception to this general finding (Tienda and Glass, 1985; Bean and Tienda 1988). That is, single Puerto Rican women are less likely to be in the labor force than married women--especially when the analysis is constrained to women who have children residing with them. Among non-Puerto Rican Hispanic women, being a female-head of household increases the probability of labor force participation (LFP) to a level higher than that of married women. Among Puerto Rican women, however, the opposite situation prevails; married women have higher rates of participation than do female-heads of households. The high concentration of Puerto Ricans in the New York area suggests that both the institutional context of New York and the selectivity of the migration process may contribute to the "deviant" Puerto Rican

Pattern (Gurak, Falcón, and Powers, 1987; 1988). A similar pattern obtains for two other large hispanic ethnic groups in New York City. Dominican and Colombian women whose spouses are living in the same household are also more likely to be employed than are female-heads of household (Gurak and Kritz 1988).[1] The presence of children in the household, on the other hand, tends to be negatively related to LFP for all groups (Bean and Tienda 1988). These effects are shown to be more pronounced among Puerto Rican than other Hispanic women (Guhleman, Tienda, and Bowman 1981).

Determinants of Labor Force Participation and Unemployment

Preliminary analysis suggests that Puerto Rican women are not a homogeneous group. In looking at particular labor force related statuses we find that 26 percent of the women in the sample have never held a paid job. In addition, 64 percent of all the women are currently neither working nor looking for employment (59 percent of these women have worked at some time). Of the total sample of women, only 24 percent were employed at the time of the survey, and another 10 percent were in the labor force, but unemployed. Furthermore, differences by educational and nativity status stand out. Mainland-born women are more likely: 1) to be in the labor force, 2) to be employed, and 3) to be in school or training programs. This differential holds for all levels of education though educational attainment is a more powerful predictor of labor force participation than is nativity (Table 8).

A series of individual characteristics are specified in model 1 of table 9 as affecting the probability of the respondent being in the labor force. As expected, education and English language usage are significantly related to LFP. The effect of education on labor force participation is weak except at the higher levels (college attendance) where its impact is dramatic. Having attained some college education increases the probability of being in the labor force by 17 percentage points. Every one point increase in

[1] In the case of Dominicans this pattern can not be attributed to an ethnic specific tendency since the relation is the polar opposite among Dominican women in the Dominican Republic.

the English language usage scale increases the probability of being in the labor force by seven points. The effects of training on LFP are also highly significant. Having received some training after formal schooling increases the probability of being in the labor force by over 15 percentage points. Overall, human capital variables have the expected effects on the probabilities of LFP for Puerto Rican women.

Household characteristics also influence the likelihood of being in the labor force. The presence of young children, being a female-head, or being pregnant are all negatively related to LFP. The presence of a child under age five decreases the probability of LFP by 17 percentage points; being a female head decreases the probability by 23 percentage points; and being pregnant decreases it by 22 points. Parental characteristics, mainly father's employment status, have some additional impact. If the respondent's father worked while she was growing up, the probability of being in the labor force is increased by 21 percentage points. If her mother worked, however, there is no additional significant effect. For this population it seems that, father's employment measures some aspect of family background which relates positively to the respondent being in the labor force. Variables measuring years of prior work experience and number of previous jobs are not significantly related to labor force participation.

The second model of Table 9 presents an analysis of the probability of unemployment using the portion of our sample who were in the labor force at the time of the survey. What is most striking from these results is the lack of significant effects of Training and Language Usage on the probability of being unemployed. This suggests that Puerto Rican women who are in the labor force are a more homogeneous group--in terms of English usage and training--than the total sample. Because there is less variability in the restricted sample, education seems to account for the effects of English Usage and Training.

Higher levels of education and Age are the important variables in determining the probability of unemployment. Having some college level education decreases the probability of unemployment by 20 percentage points while having some high school reduces the

probability 18 points. Age has a similar negative effect. The older the respondents, the less likely they are to be unemployed--by one percentage point for every additional year of age. Women with some type of disability were also more likely to be unemployed though this relationship is not significant at the .01 level.

Of the household characteristics, only being in a marital union and the presence of other adults reach significant levels--and both have negative effects on unemployment. Being in a marital union reduced the probability of unemployment by 18 percentage points. That the presence of other adults decreases the probability of unemployment supports the conclusion that this condition plays a key role in household strategies to facilitate employment (Tienda and Glass, 1985). Neither of the parental employment variables are significantly related to unemployment once the effects of human capital and household characteristics are included. Having had many previous jobs increases the probability of being unemployed. Overall, unemployment seems to be a function of human capital characteristics of the respondents, such as education; and of household composition, such as being in a union or the presence of other adults.

Discussion of Labor Force Patterns

There are concrete reasons for the different labor force related statuses of Puerto Rican women. Some of these reasons have been identified in this research, others remain to be clarified. Our findings on Puerto Rican women and those of other researchers on Hispanic women in general (Bean and Tienda 1988; Guhleman, Tienda, and Bowman 1981), suggest that the former are not different from the latter in terms of the factors which affect their labor force behavior. Those who have the skills (i.e. education, training, english usage) and household arrangements (no children under 5, not being a female-head) conducive to labor force participation, are likely to participate.

There is also a core of women, about 30%, who have never held a job and whose skill levels, age, and household composition are different from women who have worked or are currently in the labor force. As indicated earlier, structural changes in the New York

metropolitan area have recast the distribution and conditions of most of the low-skill/low-pay occupations (Sassen-Koob, 1985). The trend in female employment is toward occupations where education and, especially, english language skills are required. Given the conditions in the New York City labor market, and their human capital and household profile, it is unlikely that those women who have never held a paid job will join the labor force in New York.

Education appears as a major factor in determining labor force "success" for this population. Recent work has indicated that highly educated Puerto Rican women exhibit employment characteristics which resemble those of non-hispanic white women (Falcón-Rodríguez 1987; Falcón and Hirschman, 1988). This paper suggests that education is of critical importance for entering the labor force and holding a job, particularly in the context of the economic changes referred to earlier. These findings underline the central importance of understanding and modifying factors which contribute to the high drop-out rate of Puerto Ricans. Identifying and correcting the latter, while not an easy task, should be part of any policy agenda which intends to assist this disadvantaged population.

Our results also suggest that policies providing for training and retraining of displaced workers could contribute to alleviating problems faced by Puerto Rican women. This study has shown that having received additional training after formal schooling increases the probability of being in the labor force. However, it has no independent effects on the probability of being employed once one has entered the labor force. This indicates that increased availability of training programs could be an important initial step in increasing the labor force participation of this group.[1]

Some of our earlier comments on education apply with equal force to English language usage. The New York City labor market is one where the occupations available to women are, increasingly, those where the ability to speak English is a necessity. The

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[1] Results not shown indicate that women who had received training in computer or health related areas were particularly more likely to be in the labor force.

ability to speak the language is a pre-requisite for entering the labor force but once in, it has no independent effect on being employed.

Household arrangements play a major role in the arsenal of strategies utilized to maintain a household. Being a female head of household, having young children and being pregnant each are strongly associated with not being in the labor force. These same factors do not influence the probability of being unemployed once one is in the labor force, though two other household characteristics do have impacts. Being in a marital union[1] and having other adults present each decreases the probability of being unemployed. Neither of these factors significantly influence labor force participation (though the effect of Other Adults is in the same direction), so they apparently serve as facilitators of employment only when other conditions have already increased the probability of employment.

There is an independent and positive effect of father's employment on the likelihood of labor force participation. These results, while interesting, lead only to speculation as to their implications. It may reflect a process of generational transmission of inequality. Because father's employment is related to the socioeconomic situation of the family, the results may reflect the effects of a more stable socioeconomic situation. Within the literature, the evidence indicates that the social and economic problems faced by families have particular repercussions on their children. For example, children who are raised in mother-only families tend to be less successful, on the average, when they become adults than children from two parent families (Garfinkel and McLanahan 1986). A stable family background situation may permit one to attain more education and training, for example.

In sum, the findings presented strongly suggest that any

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[1] Being in a marital union and being a female head are more than opposing ways of saying the same thing. One can be outside of a marital union and not be a female head by virtue of having no children under 18 residing in the household. Similarly, being in a marital union has no necessary implication about the presence of children. The negative association between being in a marital union and unemployment may reflect the influence of those married women who have no children. This requires further investigation.

efforts that are made to ameliorate the problematic situation of Puerto Rican women must take into consideration not only the needs of individual women to attain certain levels of skill in order to enter the labor force, but also the effects of household factors on labor force behavior. Among Puerto Rican women, household characteristics seem to have a major impact on the likelihood of being in the labor force. This impact is over and above that of their less than optimal human capital. Given the current labor market and the current level of skills of a large number of Puerto Rican women, it appears that the reality for many will, in fact, be to remain altogether out of the labor force.

Conclusion

Summary

This examination of the links between migration, family structure and labor force participation of Puerto Rican women has demonstrated that the processes underlying each of these are intricately intertwined. The complexity of the relationships clearly caution us against arriving at sweeping generalizations concerning the underlying causes of Puerto Rican poverty (or even of its components such as female headship, low labor force participation rates, marital instability, etc).

Several points stand out. First it is clear that the selectivity of the migration process produces results in an over-representation of women in the New York region who are characterized by traits associated with poverty. Those with less labor force experience, less education, more children, and more marital instability are the ones most likely to migrate to the mainland. Those with more stable unions, fewer children and more education are the ones most likely to return to the island. This double selectivity process clearly contributes to the high rates of female headship and poverty in the New York region's Puerto Rican population.

What causes this selectivity has not been specified, but it is not typical of other migrations for which we have data on selectivity patterns. To understand this selectivity will require

some careful thinking about the history of the migration process, the changes in not only labor markets but also other institutions such as public assistance, health care, etc. It may be that the forces that initially set these selectivity mechanisms into motion may no longer be the ones that maintain its momentum. Massey, et al. (1988) argue that migrations can establish an inertia that transcends initial causes. Migrant networks are one means of so maintaining migration dynamics. To determine the extent to which this is so requires new data and approaches that utilize both micro and macro approaches.

The analysis of the determinants of female headship among those women who had previously been married partially[1] controls for the migration selectivity of those who had experienced marital disruption and probes for further correlates of being in this disadvantaged status. The finding of a relationship with religious affiliation is intriguing in part because it suggests another selectivity process involving the purposive selection of lifestyles and norms that inhibit marital disruption (net of social and economic resources). While that finding does deserve further attention, the results also reenforce the linkage of the female headship outcome with long-term processes possibly routed in migration. Those with fathers who were either not employed or not present when the respondent was growing up are more likely to be female heads. Clearly, some form of intergenerational transmission exists. This can not help but to focus the search for causes at least partially away from recent conditions. Since one can not change the past, remedies must focus on processes other than original causes. Employment and training experiences during the unions are negatively related to female headship status. This points again to the selectivity in the migration process (as well as to other factors affecting labor force participation) since those with less employment experience are most likely to migrate to the mainland.

Finally the examination of the correlates of labor force

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[1] It does not consider the more complex processes of remarriage or formation of new informal unions and the possible subsequent dissolution of those unions.

participation clearly indicate that female headship and higher recent fertility constrain labor force participation. Again, this suggests roots in the migration process. We can not sort out which comes first, the tendency not to be in the labor force or to enter a sequence of family formation events that lead to female headship. Indeed, it may not be possible to do this for those growing up in the contemporary world. All we know with certainty is that migration, labor force patterns, marital disruption and female headship are closely linked. Similarly, we can not specify exactly what it is about the New York region that fosters the migration-related concentration of poorer women in the region[1].

Blaming the victim?

Increasingly various observers of minority groups have labelled efforts that focus on individuals, as opposed to broader structures, as being guilty of blaming the victim. The logic behind this charge can not be dismissed in a summary fashion. If an effort to explain individual behavior claims nothing more than that the individuals choose to behave as they do, then that approach clearly blames the victims for their current position and problems. On a more subtle level, approaches that assume that the options open to individuals are constrained by broader structural forces may appear to be "blaming the victim" if the authors of such an effort make no effort to interpret their findings in a broader context. Such interpretations are difficult to sustain beyond the level of pure conjecture, but they are important for the advancement of knowledge on the forces shaping the lives of those in poverty (and, indeed, of any category of individuals).

Not every study of individual behavior that fails to explicitly integrate its approach and findings into a macro perspective deserves being labelled as one that blames the victim. One should also consider the usefulness of the information generated by the approach for broader contextual explanations. Furthermore, it is

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[1] The migration is such an important element of the structure of the New York region that it can not be ignored as a contributor to the structures in the region that differentially attract and repel specific migrants.

possible to accuse structural approaches that ignore individual behavior of ignoring the victims (or the ultimate objects of their studies) and simplistically assuming that all individuals react in a uniform manner to the structural "determinants" of behavior. "Ignoring the victim" can be as grievous an oversight as "blaming the victim" in that it essentially involves reliance on stereotypes and ignores the complexity of behavior. Furthermore, such an approach may not add much to the useful knowledge base because ideas will be promulgated without having been exposed to a meaningful reality check (ecological fallacy). It is necessary to understand what actual conditions individuals respond to in order to gain insight into just how important a given macro condition actually is.

Neither those focusing on individual behavior nor those concerned with macro conditions can convert every study into a total systems analysis that considers all levels of social forces. Serious scholars will recognize the need to constantly refer to the other modes of analysis in order to assist with interpretation of findings and in order to redirect efforts in more fruitful directions. This interaction can proceed without ritualistic references to complementary forms of analysis, but would clearly benefit from more serious efforts at integration of knowledge and approaches.

Micro-level studies can provide information that should be essential for any effort to articulate macro-level or structural processes. Macro-explanations usually suggest that all individuals within a given segment of a group are equally impacted by macro conditions (such as changes in industrial composition). When stated this way few would argue that this is actually the case. Clearly some are more constrained by structural parameters than others. In order to specify the nature of the differential impact, considerable information on the manner in which individuals respond to various conditions is needed. This type of information is typical of what micro-level analyses can provide.

In addition to the ability of micro-level analyses to fine tune macro-level models, they can also suggest needed major changes in course. When the goal of investigation goes beyond understanding

the forces which played major roles in initiating a trend (such as the increase in female headship) and focuses on the forces that are maintaining the trend the same macro-level model may not be appropriate. Such shifts in models may be suggested by results from micro-level analyses that are inconsistent with suggestions made from macro-level models. Some comments on how this could occur may prove useful.

Social change often appears to be asymmetric. This means that results can not be reversed merely by reversing the conditions that contributed to the onset of a trend. Such reversals occur within a new context. The new context may consist of individual and bureaucratic behaviors that have become institutionalized and now respond to reward structures largely independent of those in place at the early stages of the trend. It may be that the system of welfare programs that followed the changes in industrial composition of the 50s and 60s now condition behavior, along with other institutional complexes, in ways that would alter the impact of the reversal of trends in industrial composition. Some of the results of this analysis support this line of reasoning. The selectivity of the migration process suggests that the New York region is now perceived as the area that best meets the needs of those least likely to be able to thrive in the labor force. Part of the reason for this perception is the nature of public assistance programs; part lies in the nature of informal support networks. In addition to the availability of jobs, training programs and child-care programs would have to be far more massive today than would have been the case (given a similar availability of employment) three decades ago. The evidence on intergenerational transmission of low labor force participation and of high levels of female headship also suggests that forces beyond the availability of jobs may be more important now than in the past. The strong relationship between religious affiliation and female headship provides yet another indication of the complex manner in which individuals respond to structural constraints.

This argument does suggest that it is the characteristics of individuals that contribute to their poor outcome. But this does not mean that the individuals produce the results in a vacuum.

Ultimately, explanations must consider individuals as actors. Failure to do this is non-sensical and misleading. That individual behavior influences outcomes should not be interpreted as downplaying structural constraints (positive and negative motivational and opportunity structures). Rather, individual behavioral patterns should be used as vehicles in an effort to better understand those structural constraints.[1]

[1] When these points are stated clearly, they appear so obvious that one wonders why they need be said. One need only observe common discourse at scientific and policy meetings to realize that the obvious needs to be belabored.

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National Puerto Rican Coalition, Inc. (NPRC)

DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY BASED STRATEGY TO ADDRESS THE PERSISTENCE OF POVERTY IN THE U.S. PUERTO RICAN COMMUNITY

Introduction

> "Poor people must be expected to take charge of their own future and become responsible for their own economic advancement."
>
> **Excerpt from Economic Justice for All, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Pastoral Letter, November 1986**

> "Puerto Ricans in the United States and in Puerto Rico are still predominantly poor. How we overcome poverty and further the social, economic and political development of our community is still very much an agenda to be achieved.
>
> **Excerpt from NPRC Long Range Plan 1987-92**

In May 1987 a landmark study by Marta Tienda and Leif Jensen, "Poverty and Minorities: A Quarter Century Profile of Color and Socioeconomic Disadvantage", presented a grim picture of the worsening economic situation among Puerto Ricans. An Op-Ed piece in the August 28, 1987 issue of the New York Times, by Tienda and William Díaz, summarized the study and engendered renewed interest and concern among researchers, policy analysts, and community leaders.

> "So severe was the deterioration in Puerto Rican family incomes since 1975", Tienda and Díaz say, "that by 1984 their per capita income was only barely half that of whites (a ratio of 0.53). This figure is lower than that of blacks in 1960--prior to the Great Society's programs."

This study made it painfully clear that the time had come for NPRC to develop a major program initiative in this area. We approached the Ford Foundation to co-host two meetings of researchers working on poverty issues to assess what policy-relevant studies were available, what was being planned, and what

would be the most effective way to involve our growing network of organizations and community leaders. We felt that our presence in the nation's capital and the experience gained as a national advocate for our community before the Congress and the Executive Branch would be helpful in pursuing this initiative.

After two years of meetings and discussions with community leaders, social scientists, our Board of Directors and policymakers, NPRC has now developed a comprehensive strategy to deal with this issue. In its capacity as a national advocate NPRC initially intends to draw its broad network of local organizations into a program of advocacy at the national level to address those issues in the national policy agenda with direct relevance to Puerto Rican poverty, and to advocate for specific policies designed to affect the particular circumstances of U.S. Puerto Ricans, as distinct from those of other affected minorities. This strategy will be implemented through a planned coordinated effort building on our Washington-based Public Policy program, our field programs in Advocacy and in Community Economic Development as well as our network of over 100 organizations nationwide.

A basic assumption underlying the strategy is that the high rate of Puerto Rican poverty is primarily a consequence of the de-industrialization and economic transformation that has taken place since the late 1960s in the cities of the East and Midwest where Puerto Ricans have tended to concentrate. As the economy of these cities shifted away from "smokestack" industries and light industries such as the garment trade, Puerto Ricans and Blacks, the latest in the succession of migrant groups that had occupied jobs at the entry level, saw many of these jobs eliminated. Of the 2,004,961 Puerto Ricans identified by the 1980 Census as living in the United States, the majority lived in the nine cities listed in Table I.

Afro-Americans, whose broader distribution in the country also includes areas that showed economic growth in those years, fared slightly better overall. Puerto Ricans, who disproportionately lived in these declining cities, evidenced a significant decline in their social and economic condition. The increasing unemployment provoked a general breakdown of family and community institutions.

Societal controls weakened, and neighborhood "barrios" fell into a tailspin of breakdown, deterioration, and abandonment by the emerging middle class. The poor remained, trapped in those disintegrating neighborhoods becoming increasingly isolated.

As the economies of these cities began to recover in the eighties, they did so in wholly different industries with far higher and more specialized labor skill requirements. At the same time there was increased competition--for the few lesser-skill jobs that remained and the new low-level service jobs that emerged--by new waves of immigrants with intact family and community bonds. These immigrants had come to these cities in increasing numbers since the 1970s, fleeing economic and political crises in Asia and Latin America.

The comparison of the Puerto Rican experience with the more favorable one of other groups is inevitable, and begs for an explanation. Blacks, for example, have a much broader geographic dispersion than Puerto Ricans, including areas in the "sunbelt" that boomed economically in the seventies. One may surmise that the social indicators for Blacks limited to the same cities in which Puerto Ricans concentrate would offer a picture much closer to that of the latter. Moreover, Blacks have also made significant political gains in the last two decades, as a result of their political mobilization, and most of the ten largest U.S. cities now have Black majors.

The breakdown of the Puerto Rican (and presumably Blacks in the same cities) family unit would also explain why more recent immigrants to these cities appear to have fared better. As the number of income earners per family decreases, it is less likely that the incomes that remain will be able to raise the level of the family unit as a whole above the poverty line, especially with the low-skill low-wage jobs that are available. Simply put, a family of minimum-wage earners needs several incomes to survive. Also small businesses, a traditional escape route out of poverty for immigrants, depend heavily on a network of extended family to provide cheap (or free) family labor, family loans, and family training in learning to run the business. It is almost impossible for a single head of household to run a small business; the mom'n

pop store needs a mom and a pop. It is symptomatic that the class of Puerto Rican small merchants that seemed to thrive in the South Bronx and East Harlem in 1960 had declined significantly by the 1980s.

There are, of course, other explanations for persistent poverty, but they all complement the basic tenet presented here: the transformation of the economic environment in which Puerto Ricans live. Low educational attainment "explains" poverty to some degree; yet Puerto Rican educational levels are higher than Mexican American, while the poverty level of the latter is less. The greater availability of low-skill jobs in the southwest, the related greater integrity of the family, and the consequentially greater number of wage-earners per family in the Mexican community, all explain this. Likewise, the competition of recent immigrants could explain the displacement of Puerto Ricans from the job markets in the northeast. But the recent waves of migrations to these cities date from the late 1970s and early 1980s. By then the Puerto Ricans had suffered through a decade of severe unemployment as the industries employing them evaporated. The relatively more intact immigrant families that came later to compete with Puerto Ricans for the remaining jobs offered more wage earners, and hence a higher aggregated income per family. For the more common one-income Puerto Rican family--increasingly a single mother with child care burdens--the wages paid in those jobs were often not an alternative to dropping out of the labor force and being on welfare.

The social changes that occurred over the last 30 years thus point to the need for a strategy of community reconstruction and revitalization. This will require a major effort to re-create a base of appropriate employment through adequate education, jobs training and incentives to seek employment, and the development of a small-business class. A parallel effort must also be made to re-produce the economic support services of credit, training, and technical assistance for small businesses that are otherwise offered in an informal manner by the traditional, healthy community structures. We feel this last component will be crucial, to foster the economic revitalization of the neighborhood barrios. Finally,

the communities need help to reassemble the social institutions and organizations--family, civic groups, and community organizations--that in a healthy community serve to provide a social fabric for communication, action and ultimately development. Rebuilding these institutions, with the support of the appropriate public, corporate, and philanthropic sectors, is at the core of this strategy. To advocate for policies conducive to this rebuilding, through a partnership with the communities themselves, is its very purpose.

Poverty In The U.S. Puerto Rican Community

In 1960 the US Puerto Rican population (892,613 according to the census) was already a sizable community. Although the majority lived in New York City, the pattern of movement to other cities in the Northeast and Midwest had already begun. The conventional wisdom at the time was that as Puerto Ricans were assimilated into the mainstream and learned English they would, as previous immigrants before, be successfully integrated into the economic mainstream. That this did not occur and why presents us with a dilemma and a challenge.

The Tienda and Jensen monograph documents the fact that Puerto Ricans have experienced a significant deterioration in their socio-economic conditions since the sixties. By 1985 Puerto Rican family incomes, adjusted for inflation, had declined 19 percent, the largest decline among the groups covered in the study. And the pattern was consistent; from the period of the "Great Society" programs through the "Reagan Revolution", Puerto Ricans fared worst among other US minorities, with a pattern similar to but worse than that for Blacks.

The Tienda-Jensen paper further indicates that the pattern of economic indicators for Puerto Ricans resembles not that of Mexican Americans, with whom they share a Hispanic heritage and are usually compared to, and even less that of the Cuban Americans with whom they are perhaps culturally closest, but instead that of Afro-Americans, with whom they share characteristics of recent economic and migratory history. Blacks migrated in significant numbers to industrial jobs in the large cities of the north after the 1940s,

mainly from rural or small-town backgrounds in the South. They have since maintained a close contact and substantial circular migration with their sending communities. But Blacks are far more dispersed than Puerto Ricans across the country, and subject to far greater variety of conditions. It would be interesting to compare the indicators of Blacks with those of Puerto Ricans but only in those cities where the latter concentrate. We hypothesize there would be an even closer correlation if comparison were made between the groups in similar communities rather than national aggregates.

In Poverty in Cities, a 1989 report published by the National League of Cities, an index of concentration of poverty is described. The concept is important because it is realistically assumed that poor persons living in uniformly poor neighborhoods have fewer means to escape poverty than those living in more diverse neighborhoods. Of the fifteen cities with the highest rates of concentration of poverty in 1980, the four suffering the greatest deterioration since 1970 were all cities with large Puerto Rican populations (in order: Newark NJ, New York NY, Chicago IL and Philadelphia PA).

Unpublished data by the US Census Bureau further document the deterioration of the economic environment where Puerto Ricans live. The nine cities where the majority of US Puerto Ricans live lost almost one million manufacturing jobs between 1963 and 1982, representing a 44% loss of manufacturing employment. These losses were in the industries that typically employed Puerto Ricans: light industry in the northeast, and steel and related industry in the midwest. The greatest loss of these jobs--30%-- occurred in the decade after 1972.

Thus the budget cuts of the 1980s hit a Puerto Rican population already ravaged by the deterioration of its economic base. Unfortunately, these cuts were made in the very public services on which Puerto Ricans had been forced to increasingly depend at the same time that the industries which had employed them collapsed.

Tienda and Jensen identify a number of factors affecting changes in incomes within all of the groups in their study. The

relative importance of various income sources (including income from labor, social insurance, public assistance, and other sources) provides some explanation for differences among groups given their history, geographic location, employment patterns and demographic characteristics. Such factors as the structure and size of the family as a source of secondary labor income, headship structure, and impediments to employed labor, such as child care requirements, also had an impact.

In the Puerto Rican community, the importance of the breakdown of the family and community bonds becomes evident when comparing female headed households and female labor force participation rates between Puerto Ricans and Blacks. A recent report by Clara E. Rodriguez (Puerto Ricans: Born in the USA; 1989) relates how both groups have comparable rates of male unemployment and hence comparable reasons for male displacement from the family units. Blacks have in fact higher rates of female family headship than Puerto Ricans. Nevertheless, only 25% of Puerto Rican female heads of household participate in the labor force, compared to 54% of Blacks (and 51% of Whites). The explanation seems to reside in the greater access by Black women to a family or community network to facilitate child care. (It is perhaps significant that the civil rights struggles of the sixties and seventies resulted in an increased visibility and leadership role for Black community organizations, especially the Churches, even as the economies of some cities were suffering the transformations described above.)

Hence, the declining size of the Puerto Rican family, its growing dependence on a single source of labor income, and the increased restrictions on labor income, related to the presence of children, all may explain a substantial part of the differences observed. Tienda and Jensen state:

> "...it appears that intertemporal changes in headship structure and employment statuses of heads were associated with the observed decreases in the economic well-being of Black, Puerto Rican, and to a much lesser extent, other Hispanic and non-Hispanic white families."(p.29)

The relationship with the massive economic changes that

affected the urban areas of Puerto Rican settlement in the industrial northeast and midwest in those years is undeniable. But the specific reasons why Puerto Rican families may have been more vulnerable than other minorities to the forces that have fostered their dissolution and caused their income to plummet is still a major open question. Considering the importance of this family deterioration and the gravity and persistence of Puerto Rican poverty, this question offers an important area for a marriage between researchers and advocacy proponents that this strategy will contribute to develop.

Although the majority of Puerto Ricans in the United States have entered the economic mainstream, the fact still remains that the poverty rate among Puerto Ricans is nearly three times the national average (14%). This is a social phenomenon which deserves national attention and special concern. Concentrated in cities that suffered a collapse in the industries that employed them; experiencing a major breakdown of family and community links, as well as the ensuing isolation of individuals in increasingly smaller family units and the deterioration of their living environment; the ease of back and forth travel to Puerto Rico (coupled with the parallel economic crisis there between the early seventies to the mid-eighties); and the lack of institutions to perform the binding role that the Churches performed in the Black communities; all these factors together created a carrousel of deterioration and make the Puerto Rican case unique.

Puerto Ricans have among the smallest family sizes and the fewest number of income earners per family of any US minority group. This not only reduces the aggregate family income but deprives these persons of the family labor, informal credit, and family apprenticeship training that allows other poor communities to develop small businesses as a major creator of employment. It also precludes the services of child care, emergency loans, and crisis support that an extended family and community network is able to provide to more closely tied groups. As a result, and in contrast, other minorities' economic situation responded favorably to the social policies of the 1960s, and they were less affected by the economic changes of the 1970s and the social policy

restructuring of the 1980s.

Given these realities, public and private sector policies designed to address poverty that may work in other needy communities need not necessarily work for Puerto Ricans given their special circumstances. Thus, small-business development efforts that ignore the greater scarcity of family labor among Puerto Ricans, employment for single mothers that does not provide for Puerto Ricans' greater breadth of child care needs (and one that is affordable with the wages that they will command), jobs training that fails to bring the unemployed to the high skill levels demanded by the growth industries in those cities where Puerto Ricans presently live, educational reforms that ignore the relative absence in the Puerto Rican communities of the necessary family and neighborhood institutions to complement the effort; all these may work with other groups but are doomed to fail among Puerto Ricans. For social policies to impact on Puerto Rican poverty will require both targeted attention and the total involvement of community organizations.

Developing A Comprehensive NPRC Strategy

In 1987 and 1988, with the support of the Ford Foundation NPRC conducted a series of meetings with social scientists to identify policy relevant research topics that would directly relate to the adoption of public policies to impact on poverty in the Puerto Rican community.

The assumption then was that the deficient state of knowledge about the root causes of modern urban poverty, particularly in the Puerto Rican community, precluded the formulation of effective policies to address it. Moreover, the present thrust of research initiatives appeared to largely bypass the particular concerns of Puerto Ricans in its emphasis on numerically larger minority communities. Puerto Rican poverty, it was felt, was a unique social phenomenon distinct from that of other minorities', <u>especially</u> that of other Hispanics with whom it shares a close cultural relationship.

Two workshops co-hosted by the Ford Foundation were held, on December 4, 1987 and on March 31, 1988. The meetings, as well as

a subsequent series of individual discussions, resulted in a synthesis of the many research topics discussed into three broad areas which had the greatest promise of eliciting useful public policies. A consensus emerged as to the need to focus on three areas:

- o migratory patterns and their determinants
- o labor force and employment patterns
- o structure and dynamics of the family.

Subgroups for each major area were organized. A group reported on their current involvement in identifying and promoting policy-oriented research on topics of labor force and employment, and indicated that they would make their findings available to the larger group. A second group indicated their interest in topics relating to the Puerto Rican family, and decided to meet on their own to develop concrete researchable areas. The "family group" has since met several times with the Social Science Research Council as their host. Finally, migration topics were deemed an important component of the Puerto Rican poverty dilemma, but none of the researchers participating was able to devote time to further identify areas of needed research.

At that point, and prior to a final meeting, NPRC conducted a series of individual meetings with participants and other persons familiar with Puerto Rican issues. The purpose was to assess the process to date, and develop an initial agenda of specific actions. Also it was apparent that there existed already a considerable body of knowledge on issues of Puerto Rican poverty that had not yet been fully assessed, catalogued and integrated into policy prescriptions.

A conclusion that emerged was that further research promotion was not the best immediate course of action. What initially was required was 1) an effort of synthesizing existing documented knowledge, 2) its orientation toward concrete policy directives, and 3) its targeting toward the two types of entities who could do something about the problem: policymakers (executive and legislative, at the Federal and perhaps the State levels) and

community groups. Though NPRC believes that further research on distinctly Puerto Rican poverty is required, there is a prior need to catalogue existing knowledge in this area.

NPRC can be especially effective in bringing the issue to national attention, assessing the present state of knowledge in areas in which it is aware that policymakers lack information, and in pointing out whatever lacunae remain. This it can accomplish by producing compendia of research results in a manner and language that would be usable by the policymakers.

At the community level, NPRC can also be effective in "popularizing" the findings of research, bringing them to local agencies and community organizations to influence their policies and programs. Local groups would thus be in better position to advocate effectively before their local and state governments for the design and implementation of programs geared to the actual needs in the communities. More importantly for a national advocate like NPRC, they would be able to participate with NPRC in advocacy efforts at the national level.

The general emphasis for these activities will be those identified in the NPRC Public Policy Agenda, a periodic overview of the community's fundamental needs. At any given moment, emphasis will be given to specific issues where political space and opportunities have opened to impact on public policies at the national level. NPRC's current activities at the national policy arena keep it in contact with the current national issues that most concern Puerto Ricans. It would appear that in the foreseeable future national attention will be drawn, through legislation or Federal programs, to the following issues that affect us:

-**Education**; Several proposals for educational reform are being contemplated in various jurisdictions (such as the Chicago plan to decentralize governance of schools to the local level); there is increasing interest at all levels to insure that a High School diploma represent real skills; the dropout rate among Puerto Ricans, possibly the highest of any group, is drawing increased attention; a major educational thrust has been offered by the present administration as the "Education President"; all these offer opportunities for organized advocacy efforts by the

community.

-Jobs Training; pressure is building from all sides for a reformulation of the Jobs Training Partnership Act (JTPA); in addition, there are important jobs training implications in the applications of the 1988 Family Support Act (FSA, the "Welfare Reform" Bill).

-Implementation of the 1988 FSA; concrete rules will be developed over the next two years at the federal executive level; State guidelines will continue to be developed through the next year.

-Child Care Legislation; several initiatives stemming from a broad front aim at strengthening the child-care provisions of the FSA and developing a comprehensive child-care support package.

-Community Economic Development Programs; HUD has presented a revised concept of Enterprise Zones as a vehicle for urban revitalization; legislation is already before the Congress to grant tax incentives and put fiscal "teeth" in the existing Enterprise Zone legislation.

-Banking Legislation and Affordable Housing; a coalition of concerned organizations, including NPRC in a leadership role, succeeded in attaching significant components to the "S&L bailout Bill" of benefit to the poor (favorable references to the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act and to Community Reinvestment, and a cash balances set aside requirement for socially desirable investments).

-Civil Rights Enforcement; recent Supreme Court decisions have potentially weakened the enforcement aspects of minority setasides and other affirmative action measures. Pressure is beginning to coalesce for legislative initiatives to guarantee economic access to minorities.

Other Issues

The deterioration of the social and economic conditions of the Puerto Rican community over the past thirty years have promoted patterns of behavior among individuals which are detrimental to the overall physical, mental and social health of the community. As a result, Puerto Ricans are likelier to be either actors or victims of criminal behavior, to be users or dealers of illicit drugs, and

to be victims of the harsh environment created by this behavior in the community. This behavior and its consequences are further compounded by the diffusion of HIV, the AIDS virus, through intravenous drug use, sexual transmission and by infected mothers to their offspring.

Nevertheless, NPRC feels it must emphasize to health policymakers that the Puerto Rican AIDS problem is related to drugs to an extent greater than with other Hispanics, that a large percentage of drug users who seek assistance in rehabilitation are left in waiting lists, and that a vast amount of experience in dealing with the symptoms of the problem is already available in community organizations. The root causes of these symptoms, however, are attacked by fundamental social policies in the areas above, and hence the policy basis of this initiative by NPRC.

A Four-Pronged Approach

Each of these policy issues will have a major impact on Puerto Rican poverty. It is indispensable that the process that ultimately produces the policy prescriptions for each area contain an input of the particular needs and concerns of Puerto Ricans. This is best done by a network of grassroots Puerto Rican organizations. Unless those most affected have a clear idea of these issues and their implications for their community, efforts to mobilize them to affect these policies will fail.

NPRC proposes a four-pronged strategy to address the problem here described: Advocacy, Research, Institutional Development, and Public Awareness. These four prongs will relate in addition to NPRC's ongoing projects in Community Economic Development in various local sites. Typically developed as "partnership projects" with local organizations, these projects serve an immediate need of local communities for facilitating employment, housing or small-businesses, while at the same time strengthening the institutional base of the community and NPRC's national network.

Advocacy: NPRC is in the process of expanding and focusing its Field Advocacy Program to address the issues posed here. Developed as an extension of NPRC's national advocacy activities to the local level, the Field Advocacy Program has for the past two years

developed programs in two communities, Chicago IL and Hartford CT, for translating national advocacy methods to local issues. In addition, for the past year and upon the establishment of a Public Policy Internship program, NPRC has doubled its efforts to develop its national "grass-roots response network" as a mechanism for advocacy. NPRC is now proposing to utilize this newly developed national network and to identify four communities as "clusters" of local organizations for intensive work in developing their organizational capabilities for effective grass roots advocacy.

Research: NPRC will publish the proceedings of its Seminar on Puerto Rican Poverty, held in November 1989 to set a backdrop for its policy work. In addition, it will commission an overview of extant research findings on the causes and characteristics of Puerto Rican poverty. It further anticipates developing a definitive research project to assess the significance of the major research issues identified in the meetings with social scientists: the circular migration with the island of Puerto Rico, nature and characteristics of the Puerto Rican labor force, and the changing nature of the Puerto Rican family.

Institutional Development: A community centered effort such as the one this strategy proposes requires an effective base of institutions to carry it out at the community level. Lacking a network of community churches as extensive as that of the Black community, and having borne the brunt of de-industrialization in its neighborhood associations, the Puerto Rican community needs to significantly strengthen its community-based organizations. NPRC's local programs over the years have all had a strong component of institutional development. In recent years our membership development efforts have also included a series of institutional development services, such as fundraising and board development. We now propose to develop a specific project, whose purpose of building a strong institutional base will include basic institutional management skills and skills in national organizational networking.

Public Awareness: If an overall strategy is to be effective, national attention must be drawn to the particular needs and circumstances of the Puerto Rican community. NPRC intends to

develop a Public Affairs project to significantly expand its capability to arouse awareness for these issues at both the national and local levels. Our Public Affairs efforts will include press conferences in the communities where the overall strategy will be implemented, radio and television appearances, commissioned articles and op-ed pieces. News releases will be issued to announce start-up of the projects and the selection of advisory board members. Whenever possible, these communications will be supplemented by radio and television appearances. The media thrust will be two-pronged, with both national and local elements.

As a national network, NPRC is presently composed of some 100 organizations with a commitment to the Puerto Rican community. To maximize the outcome of this effort, NPRC can draw on the expertise of its membership to assess the content of each issue and the relevant research materials and to assist in preparing and delivering recommendations for policy actions both to policymakers and to community groups.

It can be said that NPRC has been involved since its organization (NPRC commenced operations in March 1980) in the preparatory work for this initiative. It has taken this long to develop the local and national networks, credibility in policy making and in-depth knowledge of the issues confronting the community. Given the seriousness and the urgency of the fundamental issue of persistent poverty, NPRC makes a commitment in its second decade to working to significantly reduce poverty in our community.

Frank Bonilla,
Center for Puerto Rican Studies,
Hunter College

DISCUSSION: PREPARENSE PARA LUCHAR

As the papers by Professors Clara Rodríguez, Douglas Gurak and Luis Falcón make clear, present prospects are not bright for major breakthroughs in a conclusive delineation of the nature and active causes of Puerto Rican poverty within the prevailing framework of inquiry on this theme. Along with research on other social issues but also a number of scientific projects at the federal level, the discussion today of U.S. poverty, and especially its Puerto Rican variant, seems to face what may be called a Woody Allen dilemma. "We stand at a crossroads," Woody might say. "One leads to hopelessness, the other to utter despair." We must be extremely careful in choosing the correct path, being sure to draw on the most advanced research and most seasoned policy wisdom bearing on our concerns.

Prof. Rodríguez points to limitations in the data, the enumeration, the samples and ethnic identifiers in the census and most surveys. We have a ways to go, she says, in official record keeping and even vital statistics. One may note, for example, that data on Puerto Rican births in Massachusetts have only recently become available. We need to know a great deal more about Puerto Rican language resources, what is happening to increasingly invisible cohorts of young males, and about those moving up in the occupational hierarchy along with those locked into unrewarding work.

The study of women's migration patterns by Professors Gurak and Falcón seems almost a tailor-made response to the plea by Clara Rodríguez for bringing "a wide-angle lens" to bear on the Puerto Rican experience. It is at once broad in reach and sharply focused on individual life histories. It tracks movement and change over time in people's lives over a specific period. Their key finding is that structural conditions in Puerto Rico and New York interact to bring women with children and no male partners into one major segment of the migration stream between the Island and New York.

Women raising families on their own tend to emigrate more often and are slower to return than other types of households.

But these data also dramatize the complexities and the risks of imputing motives and cultural meaning to behaviors that we know are also being shaped by distinctive forces acting at a distance. Is this pattern unique to this migration or symptomatic of a particular conjuncture or stage in a long standing process that may evidence itself in other migrations in the future? Like most research in this vein, this account raises more intriguing questions than the authors can essay to answer. Moreover, as Gurak and Falcón correctly note, setting up simple dualisms between individual characteristics and structural forces may lead as readily yo ignoring the capabilities of victims as to blaming them for institutional or system failures.

There is, of course, considerable evidence that women in this situation can overcome constraining structures with appropriate supports. The Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños participates in a Barrio Literacy Project in which women very much like those interviewed for the Gurak and Falcón study learn to read and write along with their children. These women participate actively in the production of their own life histories and use them in collective self-study. The process has moved numbers of them into new stages of self assertion and interest in educational options earlier forgone. They have been able to negotiate better relations with their partners, to bond more effectively with their children, and to deal more adequately with school and welfare bureaucracies. Knowledge can be produced in ways that unfetter lives rather than simply document human quandaries.

In any case, both contributions confirm that Puerto Ricans seem to be worst off precisely in the U.S. sites where we have been longest. We have moved from being simply ignored in most research to inclusion on the margin and now emerge as prime suspects in the personification of the most menacing social ills of our time. The consensus, confirmed in Centro and Inter-University Program for Latino Research (IUP) studies, is that vis-à-vis Euro-Americans in the U.S., Puerto Ricans are the poorest, have the smallest proportion in the work force, are the highest in female headed

households, in children living in poverty and in dropout rates. It is clear as well that structural changes in the economy, human capital differences and lingering discrimination are implicated in the general intensification of poverty and inequality that has so adversely affected Puerto Ricans. (Carnoy, Daley and Hinojosa, 1990) We are learning, as the British economist Joan Robinson warned in the 1960s that the only thing worse than being exploited by capitalists is not to be exploited by them. (Robinson, 1963) In the imagery that has captivated the media and popular discourse, Puerto Ricans are looking more and more like the prime candidates among Latinos for the underclass.

However, the jury is still out on this point. It is in the nature of inquiry into concepts like the underclass that ways of measuring them are thrown into question almost as quickly as they are formulated. By the time efforts to measure the underclass, map its distribution and establish the causes of its formation are exhausted, the concept itself may have been torn to shreds, and Puerto Ricans will still be in limbo. The most recent news from Boston itself, where these discussions were held, is that even in a full employment setting in a vigorous period of recovery, Puerto Ricans gained least from economic advances that substantially benefitted other groups. On the other hand, in a meticulous search for underclass types in Chicago, Marta Tienda reports that she was only able to find a handful of really "shiftless" Puerto Ricans, that is, individuals who though penniless responded like middle or upper class persons in rejecting unrewarding options for what to do with their time. (Tienda and Stier, 1989)

I think it's fair to say that so far efforts to pin down the nature, size and distribution of the underclass have shed little new light on the operations in the United States of class, race and even less ethnicity. We have spent so much time calibrating the distances between every conceivable sub-group and white males that the larger questions of structural and institutional forces have fallen from view. We need both Clara's "wide-angle lens" and the finer grained analysis exemplified in the Gurak and Falcón paper, but our perspective must remain critical and sensitive to the limits and implicit concessions to power embodied in the prevailing

canon of academic research. The dangers of simple dualisms between agency and structure lie not only with incomplete characterizations of "victims" but with the tendency to fail to look beyond the "structures" to the agents (sometimes themselves victims but also often victimizers) who bring into place and maintain these structures.

Thus the program the National Puerto Rican Coalition has set for itself confronts formidable challenges. To aggregate, distill and disseminate knowledge generated through such a welter of individual and organizational initiatives, each driven by distinctive intellectual and ideological commitments, is a daunting undertaking. The pitting of structural as against individual or group characteristics in the realm of research is matched by a perhaps even harder contention in the policy sphere over allegedly universalistic as against targeted remedies for growing inequality, absolute poverty and social deterioration. If immediate prospects for meaningful advance are thin on the academic front, hey may be even grimmer in policy circles.

It may be worth recalling that it took a catastrophic, world-wide depression in the 1930s to permit John Maynard Keynes to legitimize the idea that some unemployment might be involuntary. This idea is still hotly disputed, and the fragile liberal and conservative consensus on social policy, linking family assistance and job training to work, is driven by the idea that all those able to do so must work at whatever jobs the market and state may manage to offer. As regards gender, the policy debate has not even broached the matter of the economic value of women's labor outside the workplace.

The proceedings of a 1988 forum on the condition of Blacks and Latinos in U.S. cities sponsored by the IUP, the Joint Center for Political Studies and the Lyndon B. Johnson Center at the University of Texas at Austin will soon become available. Those present got a tough message from seasoned, Washington-based policy advisors. The present political climate, they affirmed, has no room for a party or national political figure carrying the banner of racially or ethnically targeted social programs as a high priority. The idea of drafting a memorandum on social policy based on the

conference deliberations for the president soon to be elected was simply abandoned.

More recently, Professor Theda Skocpol in a recapitulation of U.S. social policy in this century points to social security for the elderly as the only social program to escape the stigma attached to social assistance. Earlier programs aimed at women alone with children and especially elderly widows had fallen from public favor even before the War on Poverty. While the Family Support Act of 1988 and some polls show the public more open to support for the poor, according to Prof. Skocpol, a combination of factors-budget deficits, distrust of government, and rage at the underclass- stand in the way of any political program based on targeting. However apparent it may be that without targeting, sustained economic growth and liberalized social supports will still leave social groups aligned pretty much in keeping with their present endowments, Prof. Skocpol argues that the only viable present strategy is for very low profile targeting under the ideological cloak of universalism. (Skocpol, 1989)

These considerations, of course, bear chiefly on racial targeting and do not even address the barriers to targeting for Latinos or Puerto Ricans. Then again, difficulties at the federal level should not blind us to important openings and opportunities for creative policy incursions in cities and states of Puerto Rican concentration. While Puerto Ricans have sustained nearly two decades of economic decline, considerable strides have been made in developing intellectual, political and organizational resources, many of them part of the National Puerto Rican Coalition. The Coalition has advanced a courageous manifesto and a clearly specified action program. But there will also have to be a remarkably imaginative mustering of friendly forces and a very persistent questioning of prevailing structures of knowledge production and policy formation to move this program forward. Prepárense para luchar.

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TABLE I

PUERTO RICAN POPULATION IN CITIES OF HIGHEST
PUERTO RICAN CONCENTRATION IN THE CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES

CITY	PUERTO RICANS	TOTAL POPULATION
Boston	29,743	563,000
Bridgeport	22,146	143,000
Chicago	112,074	3,005,000
Cleveland	14,085	574,000
Hartford	24,615	136,000
Newark	39,732	329,000
New York City	860,552	7,072,000
Philadelphia	46,990	1,688,000
Rochester	13,430	242,000
TOTALS	1,163,367	13,752,000

Sources: Office of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico assembly of data acquired from the 1980 U.S. Census; Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1988, 108th ed., pp. 32-34.